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# A LITERARY MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

EDITED BY

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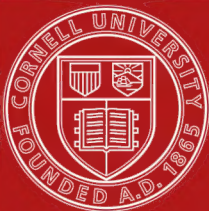
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TO MY WIFE  
ELIZABETH MERRILL COOK  
WHOSE INSPIRATION AND HELP  
HAVE MADE THIS BOOK POSSIBLE



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## PREFACE

Only two questions need to be satisfactorily answered in order to insure for Middle English literature a much larger place in college courses than it has hitherto occupied. These two questions are: Is the literature of this period worth reading? and, Can it be read without a learned apparatus so formidable as to constitute a serious deterrent? The first question I have endeavored to answer in the Introduction; and to the second my affirmative reply is indicated in the whole method I have followed.

This book, then, has been framed, not in the interest of grammar, or of dialectical study, or of lexicography, but of literary enjoyment and profit. It has been made somewhat copious, that those who desire only easier selections may be able to avoid the harder, that it may be possible to examine certain species and ignore others, and yet that the more comprehensive student shall have before him a fairly full conspectus of the literature as a whole. If I have not failed in my attempt, the texts included ought not to be much harder to read than if they were Elizabethan, and those who read them will be acquainting themselves with an earlier and no less important age.

Authorities vary with respect to the limits of the Middle English period, the variation as to the beginning being between 1100 and 1200, and as to the end between 1400 and 1500. Some scholars, such as Sweet, call the language between 1100 and 1200 Transition Old English, and that between 1400 and 1500 Transition Middle English. In this book Middle English is assumed to cover 1100-1500. In two instances, works only to be found in manuscripts of later date than 1500 are assigned, on what seem to the editor sufficient grounds, to the fifteenth century.

The classification here observed is according to literary species, and not according to dialect or chronology. The species of literature are, however, not so clearly delimited in Middle English as in

some other tongues, notably in Greek, so that the classification of certain pieces must be regarded as only approximative.

No separate vocabulary has been provided, and no separate body of notes. On each page the reader will find, it is hoped, what is essential for a sufficient understanding of that page; if this has entailed a certain amount of repetition, or what to some minds may seem excess, in the defining of words, it must be borne in mind that he who is able to read while running is not obliged to pause. The general introduction has been made brief. The prefatory notes to the various selections are longer or shorter, according to circumstances. The list of helpful books will enable the student to extend his inquiries in a variety of directions.

The editor has used his own judgment with respect to punctuation and capitalization, has normalized *i* and *j*, *u* and *v*, capitalized the first personal pronoun, and substituted 'Jesu' for the ordinary 'Jhesu' — which is due to a misapprehension. In the constitution of certain texts he has emended somewhat freely, but has always endeavored to supply the means of restoring the manuscript readings or the text of an earlier editor; where there is reason to suppose that the latter faithfully represents the manuscript, it has been referred to in the footnotes as 'MS.'

An effort has been made to give due credit in each specific case of indebtedness; if there has been any failure in this respect, it is involuntary.

If this book succeeds in making the Middle Ages seem more attractive, more clearly related to modern times, or more profoundly suggestive, the editor will be satisfied. To him Middle English literature helps to make England, not less real, but more visionary, in the sense of Kipling's lines:

She is not any common Earth,  
Water or wood or air,  
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,  
Where you and I will fare.



# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

	PAGE
I. THE LITERATURE . . . . .	xiii
II. THE LANGUAGE . . . . .	xviii
III. SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH	xxvi

## ROMANCES

— MALORY, MORTE DARTHUR . . . . .	I
Lancelot and Elaine . . . . .	2
Tristram and Isolde: The Love-Drink . . . . .	7
The Quest of the Holy Grail: The Vow . . . . .	8
— KING HORN . . . . .	11
— HAVELOK THE DANE . . . . .	17
— GOWER, CONFESSIO AMANTIS . . . . .	34
Apollonius of Tyre . . . . .	35
Æson's Restoration to Youth . . . . .	45
— SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT . . . . .	53
— THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE . . . . .	70
— AMIS AND AMILOUN . . . . .	81
— SIR ORFEO . . . . .	88
— CHAUCER, SIR THOPAS . . . . .	108

## TALES

— CHAUCER, PRIORESS' TALE: THE LITTLE CHOIR-BOY . . . . .	117
— THE IMPRISONED WIFE (INCLUSA) . . . . .	125
— DAME SIRITH . . . . .	141
— ROBIN HOOD AND THE MONK . . . . .	158
— KING ROBERT OF SICILY . . . . .	167
— CHAUCER, CLERK'S TALE: THE STORY OF GRISELDA . . . . .	173
— THE FOX AND THE WOLF . . . . .	188
— CHAUCER, NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE: THE COCK AND THE FOX . . . . .	198

## CHRONICLES

	PAGE
LAYAMON, BRUT . . . . .	219
✓ Layamon's Account of Himself . . . . .	219
✓ The Prophecy of Diana . . . . .	220
✓ The Building of London . . . . .	223
✓ The Division of Lear's Kingdom . . . . .	225
Cæsar's Battle with the Britons . . . . .	229
Cymbeline and the Birth of Christ . . . . .	233
✓ THE OLD ENGLISH CHRONICLE: THE REIGN OF STEPHEN (A.D. 1137) . . . . .	235
BARBOUR, THE BRUCE . . . . .	237
Sir James Douglas . . . . .	238
The Winning of Roxburgh Castle . . . . .	240
The Battle of Bannockburn (A.D. 1314) . . . . .	244

## STORIES OF TRAVEL

SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE . . . . .	248
The Rebirth of the Phoenix . . . . .	248
The Paradise of the Old Man of the Mountain . . . . .	250
The Fountain of Youth . . . . .	252
St. Thomas and Indian Idolatry . . . . .	253
The Sultan of Egypt . . . . .	255
✓ The Earth is Round . . . . .	256
✓ The Terrestrial Paradise . . . . .	259
Sir John's Modesty . . . . .	260
✓ A PILGRIMAGE TO COMPOSTELLA . . . . .	261

## RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC PIECES

✓ ROLLE, THE FORM OF PERFECT LIVING . . . . .	265
The Love of God . . . . .	266
The Active and the Contemplative Life . . . . .	267

# CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
THE ANCREN RIWLE . . . . .	269 ✓
Anchoresses not to look out upon the World . . . . .	270
The Beauty of Silence . . . . .	272
The Happiness of Anchoresses is like that of the Birds of Heaven . . . . .	273
The Kingly Wooer . . . . .	274
The Anchoress' Cat, her Clothing and Occupations . . . . .	275
The Anchoress' Health . . . . .	277
A TREATISE AGAINST MIRACLE-PLAYS . . . . .	278 ✓
MIRK, INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARISH PRIESTS . . . . .	287
The Character of a Priest . . . . .	287
Behavior in Church . . . . .	288
The Creed . . . . .	289
The Vanities of the Flesh . . . . .	290
Sins of Carelessness . . . . .	291
The Pronouncing of Excommunication . . . . .	291
Form of Excommunication (I) . . . . .	292
Form of Excommunication (II) . . . . .	292
THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT . . . . .	293
The Hours for Meals . . . . .	294
Daily Occupations . . . . .	295
Lenten Observance . . . . .	296
The Entertainment of Guests . . . . .	297
The Nun's Clothing . . . . .	298
The Porter . . . . .	300
ROBERT MANNYNG OF BRUNNE, HANDLING SIN . . . . .	300
The Proper Way of keeping Holy Days . . . . .	301
The Evil of Tournaments . . . . .	303
Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln . . . . .	305
Quiet in Church and Churchyard during the Time of Service . . . . .	306
The Tale of the Miner . . . . .	307
THE BOOK OF THE KNIGHT OF LA TOUR-LANDRY . . . . .	309
Prologue . . . . .	309
The Story of the Magpie . . . . .	311
The Story of the Obedient Wife . . . . .	312
How St. Bernard's Sister was led away from Vanities . . . . .	313
GESTA ROMANORUM: THE MAGIC IMAGE . . . . .	314

	PAGE
THE BESTIARY . . . . .	316
The Whale (Turtle) . . . . .	316
The Panther . . . . .	319
THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE . . . . .	321
PIERS THE PLOWMAN . . . . .	334
Prologue . . . . .	335
Meed the Maiden . . . . .	339
Gluttony . . . . .	345
Sloth the Parson . . . . .	348
Piers the Plowman . . . . .	350
PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S CREED . . . . .	352

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

SONG AGAINST THE FRIARS . . . . .	361
ON THE MINORITE FRIARS . . . . .	364
THE REPLY OF FRIAR DAW TOPIAS . . . . .	366
THE LAND OF COKAYGNE . . . . .	367
THE GOSSIPS' FEAST . . . . .	372
STANS PUER AD MENSAM . . . . .	377
CHARM FOR THE TOOTHACHE . . . . .	379
PREFACE TO A TREATISE ON MEDICINE . . . . .	379
A MEDIÆVAL WILL . . . . .	381
THE LIBEL OF ENGLISH POLICY . . . . .	382
THE GUILD OF ST. LEONARD . . . . .	387

## TRANSLATIONS

CHAUCER, THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE . . . . .	389
The Joys of Spring . . . . .	390
The River and the Garden . . . . .	392
The Picture of Old Age . . . . .	393
CHAUCER'S TRANSLATION OF BOETHIUS . . . . .	394
The Former Age . . . . .	397

	PAGE
WYCLIFFITE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE . . . . .	398 ✓
Job 41. 20-28; 42. 4-25 . . . . .	398
John 17. 1-6 . . . . .	400
Revelation 14 . . . . .	400
VERSIONS OF PSALM 51. 1-3 . . . . .	402 ✓

LYRICS

CUCKOO SONG . . . . .	406
SPRING . . . . .	407
WHEN THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS . . . . .	408
ALISON . . . . .	410
CHAUCEER, BIRD-SONG . . . . .	411
BLOW, NORTHERN WIND . . . . .	412 ✓
LONGING . . . . .	414
NOW WOULD I FAIN . . . . .	416
CHAUCEER, MERCILESS BEAUTY . . . . .	417
DEBATE OF THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN . . . . .	418
CHAUCEER, BALLADE . . . . .	420
MINOT, EDWARD THE THIRD'S FIRST INVASION OF FRANCE . . . . .	421
THE DEATH OF EDWARD III . . . . .	425
CHAUCEER, COMPLAINT TO HIS EMPTY PURSE . . . . .	428
I HAVE A GENTLE COCK . . . . .	429
BACHELOR'S SONG . . . . .	430
CHAUCEER, TRUTH . . . . .	431
UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT? . . . . .	432
THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE-SONG . . . . .	433
EARTH UPON EARTH . . . . .	436
FILIUS REGIS MORTUUS EST . . . . .	438
QUIA AMORE LANGUEO . . . . .	439
HE BARE HIM UP . . . . .	440
THE PEARL . . . . .	441
GODRIC'S HYMNS . . . . .	453
Hymn to the Virgin . . . . .	454
Hymn of Burgwine, Godric's Sister . . . . .	454
Hymn to St. Nicholas . . . . .	455
I SIGH WHEN I SING . . . . .	455

	PAGE
A SONG TO THE VIRGIN . . . . .	457
STAND WELL, MOTHER, UNDER ROOD . . . . .	459
AS I RODE . . . . .	462
WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN OF MARY FREE . . . . .	464 ✓
AT CHRISTMAS, MAID MARY . . . . .	465 ✓
I SING OF A MAIDEN . . . . .	466
LULLAY, MY CHILD . . . . .	466
THE SHEPHERD UPON A HILL HE SAT . . . . .	468 ✓
JUDAS . . . . .	470
ST. STEPHEN AND HEROD . . . . .	472 ✓
CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO VENUS . . . . .	474
CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO THE TRINITY . . . . .	475

## PLAYS

THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN . . . . .	476
THE CHESTER NOAH'S FLOOD . . . . .	481
THE BROME PLAY OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC . . . . .	497
THE YORK NATIVITY PLAY . . . . .	518
THE SECOND TOWNELEY SHEPHERDS' PLAY (SECUNDA PASTORUM)	524



# INTRODUCTION

## I. THE LITERATURE

Mediaeval European literature — at least if we except technical works and prose chronicles or histories — is characterized, in contrast with the ancient classics, by a certain expansiveness, resulting at times in an approach to garrulity. The author is not bent upon treating the matter in hand with the utmost economy, in order with the fewest possible strokes to achieve the finest proportions, the utmost simplicity, the most telling effect. The mediaeval writer is more apt to be loose and desultory. At times he does not hesitate to be long-winded in description, discursive in the development of episodic reflection, tedious in the analysis of sentiment, or didactic in the enforcement of a moral. In all too few instances has he a sure sense of art — avoiding superfluity and digressions, and making straight for his goal. He employs repetition — for instance, in the refrain, or in the recurrent lines of the roundel; and, for the sake of rhyme, or to fill out a line, he will introduce conventional, almost meaningless, tags.

Vernacular writing in the Middle Ages was primarily addressed to the laity — to people who had not received the training of the schools, and who therefore were unaccustomed to strict sequences of thought, or to the measure and sobriety of perfect art. This may be clearly seen by the way in which translations are expanded — always excepting prose versions of the Bible and of some theological treatises. Chaucer,<sup>1</sup> in translating Boethius, uses three times as many words as the Latin verse, and more than twice as many as the Latin prose. The 38 words of Psalm 51. 1-3<sup>2</sup> in the Vulgate are converted by a late Middle English paraphrast into 194. Such translations, being less compact than the originals, made fewer demands

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 394-5.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 402 ff.

upon the reader; he found them easier to follow, though his wits may have gone wandering before he reached the end.

Such absence of restraint may, according to circumstances, affect readers of to-day variously. Some things mediæval we may all find tedious, some things puerile; some things, on the other hand, simple, direct, and sweet—childlike, rather than childish. But take the pseudo-Mandeville,<sup>1</sup> for instance; is it easy to dismiss him with an epithet to which we should all assent? Is his book incredibly stupid—as much of it is certainly incredible—or is it always amusing? As easy to answer this, perhaps, as another question—is the compiler naïvely credulous, or is he an astute romancer? Perhaps neither the one nor the other, or rather both. Searching criticism reveals that some of his information rests on good authorities, and is true; other things are truth magnified and embellished by a purple mist; and still others are ancient poetry or fiction regarded as contemporary fact. His book is rambling, incoherent, uninformative, if you will; but to some minds it is charming. *Piers Plowman* leads us nowhither; but on the road we drop in at a tavern, and the low life of England under the senile Edward or the adolescent Richard is as plain before us as that of Holland in a picture by Teniers or Jan Steen, so that we look and listen in spite of ourselves.

All this is Gothic, both in the sense that we recognize, and in that which appealed to our ancestors of the eighteenth century. It lacks restraint; it is flamboyant; it sins by excess; it seems to emphasize the detail, and neglect the *ensemble*; its gargoyles grin, no less than its saints aspire; it comprehends legend, poetry, and record of fact—but who shall say where legend ends and fact begins? On the other hand, it is rich, and varied, and alive; not all the forms are noble or beautiful, but most are interesting; and there is often a science of structure when least suspected, though sometimes instinctive, sometimes empirical, and sometimes insufficient, like that which left the tower of Beauvais a heap of ruined stones.

And as Gothic borrowed something from Byzantine art, so there are Oriental elements in mediæval literature—not only such as are derived from the Bible and the primitive liturgies, but those that

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 248 ff.

came in with pilgrim, merchant, and Crusader, visible more especially in tale and romance.

The Gothic cathedrals of the consummated Middle Ages succeeded, and in some sense grew out of, the earlier Romanesque, with its obvious, if somewhat oppressive, structure and solidity. The Romanesque church embodies the classic principles illustrated by the Roman arch and the Roman basilica, just as Augustine and Bede continue the Roman literary tradition. The latter have more moderation, more severity, than a Bonaventura or a Richard Rolle. The cathedral is more florid, more airy, more gorgeous with flaming color than the Romanesque church; but it is more crumbling, and tends more swiftly to decadence and overthrow. The simpler Gothic runs apace into the Flamboyant, and lo, before one can realize it, it has slid into the earlier Renaissance. So it is with literature; so it is with society. Beauty flowers for a moment out of strength; but pass by a few days later, and the blossom is faded, the glory departed.

Thus far, however, we have been disregarding certain works which appear even in the high mediæval period, but which differ notably from those that we have been attempting to characterize. They are works of measure and sobriety, like those of classic antiquity, rigorously planned; in them every line is structural, and you must read every line in order to be impressed by the magnitude, the logic, or the splendor of the whole. Of these the supreme type is the *Divine Comedy*. True, the *Divine Comedy* has been compared to a cathedral, not without reason; but the Gothic cathedral was never finished; many accretions to its original design might have fallen out otherwise; it did not represent a basic style, out of which others might in due course proceed; it was not, in the same sense as the Romanesque, grounded, massive, eternal. In all these respects Dante's poem might be compared to the earlier form. No one has been able to suggest an essential improvement in it; in itself, and through its outgrowths, it dominates all later European poetry of the chivalrous or 'romantic' temper. The lineaments of Beatrice swim before every ardent Christian lover, and Stephen Phillips can still write of Paolo and Francesca.

Why has Dante this power and this permanence? Partly because he was Dante — that is, a genius; but also because, by his own avowal, he placed himself under the tutelage of Virgil, and hence of Homer.

In a measure, the same thing is true of Boccaccio. His long-winded romances have not endured; but the *Decameron*, written with classic restraint and finish, has not only survived, but is still a model of prose. If we meet with comparatively little of this sort in Middle English, it is because the Renaissance began to exert its power much earlier in Italy than in England, or even in France.

But if we may expect few well-rounded wholes in Middle English literature, we must recognize that the poetic faculty, released from the strenuous and incessant task of watching over the complete organism at every step, is the more free to abandon itself at any moment to the full tide of occasional sentiment — comic, pathetic, tender, or wistful. A piece otherwise marred by imperfections may thus have lovely or poignant bits, so irresistible as to suffuse a glow over the composition as a whole, and blind our eyes to the faults which readily disclose themselves to reflection. And since, speaking broadly, the demands that we may make upon Middle English literature are restricted by considerations of form, it is with peculiar satisfaction that we now and then come upon a complete piece, as in Chaucer at his best, that endures the most searching trials, and yields unalloyed pleasure at every reperusal. But such encounters in Chaucer cause a deeper regret that so large a part of his writing is fragmentary, that his assignment of the several Canterbury tales to the personages of the pilgrimage is not always convincing, and that his greatest work, when viewed in the light of his own avowed plan, remains a torso.

To begin, and never to end, or to end only by stopping when fatigue or caprice dictates; to project what can never be compassed, or what is amorphous in its very conception; to reveal beauty only in glimpses, anon to be swallowed in convention or dullness — this it is to belong to the typical Middle Age, oppressed and glorified by its sense of the infinite, and seeing visions of starry brightness projected against a background of violence and fraud, of triumphant injustice

and unbearable oppression. The Crusades, the Hundred Years' War, typify in the world of action some of the literary and architectural phenomena that we have been attempting to describe — doomed to be abortive from their very nature, uninspired in many, perhaps most, of their particulars, but illumined by flashes of heroism and of generous sentiment, too fine to be steadily realized in the even course of a workaday world. In this respect the classic ideal, both of life and art, is more compassable, because more modest. Horace accomplishes what he undertakes more evenly, more uniformly, than Chaucer — yet shall I hesitate to say that some of us prefer Chaucer?

Whatever we may deny to our Middle English authors, in certain respects they are unrivaled. The wistfulness of regret for vanished glories, the sympathy with an outcast and bereaved wife, the mirthful interest in the mimic manhood of the barnyard, the joyous participation in the young life of the Maytime, the swift change by which the clowns and thieves of a Yorkshire moorside are transported to the Judean plains and the presence of the Divine Child in his sweet and touching innocence — these things have a perennial savor, a persistent appeal, even as the sorrows of Lear, the maiden grace of Miranda, the humors of Falstaff, or the piteous pleadings of Desdemona.

## II. THE LANGUAGE

### LETTERS

The letters are the same as in modern English (but see below), with the addition of  $\mathfrak{z}$  ( $\mathfrak{Z}$ ),  $\mathfrak{p}$  ( $\mathfrak{P}$ ), and  $\mathfrak{th}$  ( $\mathfrak{D}$ ).  $\mathfrak{Z}$  (from an old manuscript-form of *g*) is used for modern English *gh* (often before *t*) and for *y* (at the beginning or end of a syllable).  $\mathfrak{P}$  (*thorn*) and  $\mathfrak{th}$  (*eth*, as in *weather*) represent *th*, and are used interchangeably with *th* and each other.

*I* is represented in the manuscripts by *i*, and *v* by *u*; so that, strictly speaking, *j* and *v* should be subtracted from the total number of letters. *Y* is very frequently used for *i*, and the two are virtually interchangeable as vowels.

### PRONUNCIATION

There are two possible ways of pronouncing Middle English—one for quick understanding, the other for beauty. According to the first, one reads the text like so much modern English, at the same time converting the words, wherever possible, into their modern English forms. This answers sufficiently well in the case of prose, or of poetry written without much regard to metrical principles; but it should always be regarded as a makeshift, and, in the strict sense, as unscholarly. Perhaps the aptest apology for it would be found in our reading Shakespeare as modern English, in spite of the fact that to Shakespeare himself our modern pronunciation would, to a large degree, have seemed unintelligible or barbarous.

The second mode of pronunciation, essential to the just rendering of artistic verse, takes account of two things—strict metre, and the quite different values of certain letters, especially the vowels, from those of modern English. By attending to these, much Middle English poetry may be made beautiful to the ear which otherwise



would sound commonplace or uncouth; and this result is quite worth the trouble involved.

The recognition of metrical technique in Middle English depends chiefly upon the pronunciation of final *-e* (besides *-es*, etc., in unstressed positions). As a rule, final *-e* is always to be regarded as forming a separate syllable; but before vowels, the commonest words beginning with *h*, and occasionally elsewhere, it is silent. The simplest rule is this: In verse, always pronounce final *-e* (*-es*, etc.) where it will conduce to the melody of the line, but suppress it in the comparatively rare instances where it does not. Such *-e*'s are always to be pronounced like the *-a* in *era* or *vista*. The *-e* of *-ed*, *-el*, *-en*, *-er* is also to be suppressed when metre so requires.

Besides the final unstressed *-e*, there is also a *stressed -e*—often represented by *-y* in modern English; thus, *cite* (i.e. *cit  *), *city*.

#### VOWELS

Short vowels are pronounced about as in modern English, but *a* nearly as *ah* (*never* like *a* in *hat*); *o* always rounded (produced with rounded lips; about like *aw*, but shorter), and *never* pronounced like *a* in modern *ah*; *u* as in *pull*, not as in *dull*. From the normal *o* is to be distinguished an *o* which is equivalent to *u*, and originally was *u*; it can be known by its always corresponding to the modern English *o* or *u* pronounced as *u* in *sun*: e.g. Middle English *sonne*, *sone*, *love*, etc. (OE. *sunne*, *sunu*, *lufu*, etc.), modern English *sun*, *son*, *love*, etc.

Long vowels are never pronounced as in modern English, but as in the European pronunciation of Latin, or approximately as in Italian, French, or German, thus:

<i>a</i> as in <i>father</i>	<i>o</i> close as in <i>blow</i>
<i>e</i> ( <i>ee</i> ) close as in <i>they</i>	<i>o</i> open as in <i>broad</i>
<i>e</i> ( <i>ee</i> ) open as in <i>there</i>	<i>u</i> as in <i>rule</i>
<i>i</i> as in <i>pique</i>	

Close and open *e* can only be discriminated by the student of Old English; close *o* is *oo* in modern English, open *o* being *o*, *oa*, etc. The double vowels, *ee* and *oo*, merely indicate long *e* and *o*, and are *never* to be pronounced as in modern English.

## DIPHTHONGS

The diphthongs **ei** and **ui** are to be pronounced like the first element followed by the second, and with the first element stressed. The remaining diphthongs are thus pronounced :

**ai** as in *aisle*

**au (aw)** as in *house* (Ger. *Haus*)

**eu (ew)** as in *few*

**iu (iw)** as in *few*

**oi** as in *boil*

**ou (ow)** as in *boor*, when *now* pronounced as in *out*, *cow*

**ou (ow)** as  $\bar{o} + u$  (nearly as  $\bar{o}$ ), in all cases but the preceding

## CONSONANTS

**c** pronounced as *k* or *s*, under the same circumstances as in modern English; **ci** not = *sh*, but = *si* (modern Eng. *see*)

**ch** as in modern English, except before *t*, when it was pronounced like the *ch* in Ger. *ich* after *e*, *i*, or *y*, and like *ch* in Ger. *auch* after the other vowels

**g** as in *gold*, except occasionally as in *gem*; **ght** like **cht** (see above)

**ȝ** initial = *y*; **ȝt** like **cht**

**h** final sometimes like the **ch** of **cht**: **sih**, **purh**

**ht** like **cht**

**kn** never like *n*, but = *k* + *n*

**s** like *z* between vowels, as in modern English

**sch** like *sh*

**si** not = *sh*, but = modern Eng. *see*

**þ**, **ȝ** like *th* (both sounds) in modern English

**tu** not = *chu*: **na-tu-re**

Double consonants before a vowel are always pronounced twice: **renne** = **ren** + **ne**; **thridde** = **thrid** + **de**

## INFLECTION

## NOUNS

The genitive singular and the plural regularly end in **-(e)s** (occasionally **-is**, **-us** ; **-(e)z**) ; the dative in **-e**, or without ending. To such irregular plurals (identical with the singular) as occur in the Modern English *sheep*, *swine*, etc., add **hors**. Certain original feminines like **lady**, **halle**, **sonne**, sometimes retain the nominative form in the genitive singular ; to these add the nouns of relationship, **fader**, **brother**, **moder**, etc., which, however, sometimes have **-s**. A few nouns of the Old English weak declension end in **-n** in the plural, like **been**, *bees* ; **yen**, *eyes* (modern poetic *eyne*) ; **schoon**, *shoes* (modern poetic *shoon*), and are occasionally followed by others which more normally would end in **-s** (see, for example, Layamon).

## ADJECTIVES

The plural and the dative singular of adjectives ending in a consonant are often formed by the addition of **-e**. When the adjective is preceded by the definite article, a demonstrative, or a possessive, **-e** is sometimes appended : **the grete honour** ; **his white baner**.

## PRONOUNS

The only forms which are not fairly self-explanatory are those of the feminine personal pronoun. The typical paradigm follows :

SING.	N.	h(e)o ; s(c)ho, s(c)he
	G.	} hir(e), hur(e), her(e)
	D.	
	A.	hi(e), hir(e), hur(e), her(e)
PLUR.	N.	h(i)e ; thei, thai
	G.	her(e), h(e)or(e) ; their(e)
	D.	} he(o)m, hi(o)m ; the(i)m, tha(i)m
	A.	

The plurals of the personal pronouns of all genders are identical with those of the feminine. The genitive and dative singular of **hit**, *it*, are the same as those of the masculine : **his**, **him**.

Of the second person, **ye** is nominative; **you, yow**, dative and accusative.

**Tho** and **thos(e)** are independent demonstratives, each meaning *those*.

## VERBS

The normal endings of the verb (disregarding the subjunctive) are :

IND. PRES. SING.	1. -e
	2. -est
	3. -eth
PLUR.	-e(n)

WEAK VERBS		STRONG VERBS
IND. PRET. SING.	1. 3. -(e)dē, -tē	—
	2. -(e)dest, -test	-e, —
PLUR.	-(e)dē(n), -tē(n)	-e(n)
IMPER. SING.	-e, —	
PLUR.	-e, -eth, —	
INFIN.	-e(n), —; occasionally, -in, -yn	
PRES. PART.	-ing(e); -inde (-ende, -and)	
PAST PART.	-(e)d, -t (of weak verbs); -e(n), -n (of strong verbs)	

The ind. pres. 3 sing. of a stem ending in **-t** or **-d** is often condensed to **-t**: thus, **sit** = **sith** (for modern *sitteth*).

The following are the more important irregular verbs.

Conjugation of **be(n)**, **beo(n)**, *be*.

INDICATIVE		SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES. SING.	1. <b>be(o)</b> ; <b>am</b> , <b>æm</b> ; neg. <b>nam</b>	1. 2. 3. <b>b(e)o</b> , <b>be</b> , <b>bi</b>
	2. <b>be(e)st</b> ; Northern <b>es</b> , <b>is</b> , <b>bese</b> ; <b>art</b> , <b>ert</b> ; with pers. pron. <b>artu</b> , <b>artow</b> ; neg. <b>nart</b>	
	3. <b>beth</b> , <b>beo(th)</b> ; <b>is</b> , <b>ys</b> ; Northern <b>bes(e)</b> , <b>es</b> ; neg. <b>nis</b> , <b>nys</b>	
PLUR.	<b>beo(th)</b> , <b>be(e)th</b> , <b>be(o)n</b> , <b>be(ne)</b> ; Northern <b>es</b> , <b>is</b> ; <b>synd(en)</b> ; <b>ar(e)n</b> , <b>ern</b> , <b>are</b> , <b>ere</b>	<b>be(n)</b>

PRET. SING.	1. 3. was, watz; neg. nas		wer(e), war(e)
	2. were	*	were
PLUR.	were(n), ware(n)		were(n)
IMPER. SING.	be(o)	INFIN.	be(n), bene, beon
PLUR.	be(o)th		
PRES. PART.	beende, being(e)	PAST PART.	(i)be(o)n, (i)be(o), bene

Conjugation of **habben, have(n), have.**

	INDICATIVE	SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES. SING.	1. (h)abbe, have 2. hafest, ha(ve)st; Northern havis, has(e), hatz; with pers. pron. hastow 3. habbeth, haveth, hath; Northern havis, has	1. 2. 3. (h)abbe, have
PLUR.	habbeth, haveth, have, han; Northern havis, has(e)	have(n)
PRET. SING.	1. 3. hafede, haved(e), hædde, had(d)e 2. hevedest, haddist; Northern hade	1. 2. 3. [Like Ind. 1 and 3]
PLUR.	hæfden, hadde(n), haveden	[Like Ind.]
IMPER. SING.	ha(f)e, have	INFIN. habben, haven, han
PLUR.	habbeth, haveth	
PRES. PART.	hæbbende, hafand, having(e)	PAST PART. (i)haved, (i)hafd, (i)had

Conjugation of **go(n), ga(n), go.**

IND. PRES. SING. 1. go, ga; 2. gost, gast, gest; 3. goth, gath; Northern gæth, gæs; PLUR. goth, gath, go(n), ga(n). PRET. eode, geode, yede, yode, wente. PAST PART. (i)gan, (i)go(n), went.

Conjugation of **cunne(n), conne(n), know, be able.**

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. can(n), con(n); 2. canst, const; PLUR. cunne(n), conne(n), cunneth. PRET. c(o)uthe, cowthe, coude. PAST PART. c(o)uth.

Conjugation of —, *may, must*.

PRES. SING. 1. 3. **mōt**; 2. **most(e)**; PLUR. **mote(n)**. PRET. SING.  
1. 3. **most(e)**; 2. **mostes(t)**; PLUR. **moste(n)**.

(By the early fifteenth century, at latest, the preterit forms were also used as present.)

Conjugation of **mugen, mowe(n)**, *be able, be permitted*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. **mai(ȝ)**, **mey**, **may(e)**; 2. **miht**, **maist**;  
PLUR. **mage(n)**, **mawen**, **muge**, **muwe(n)**, **mow**, **mowe(n)**. PRET.  
SING. 1. 3. **mihte**, **mo(u)ht(e)**, **myȝt**; 2. **mihtes(t)**; PLUR.  
**mihte(n)**.

Conjugation of —, *shall*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. **s(h)al(l)**, **schal(l)**; 2. **s(c)halt**; Northern  
**sall**; with personal pronoun **shaltow**; PLUR. **s(c)hul(l)(en)**,  
**sholen**. PRET. **s(c)holde**, **s(c)hulde**; PLUR. **s(c)holden**, **s(c)hulden**.

Conjugation of **willen**, *will*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. **wol(e)**, **wulle**, **wil(l)(e)**; 2. **wolt**, **wilt**,  
**wil(l)**; with personal pronoun **woltow**, **wiltu**; PLUR. **wol(le)n**,  
**wol(e)**, **wile(n)**. PRET. **wolde**; PLUR. **wolde(n)**. PAST PART.  
**wold**.

Conjugation of **wite(n)**, *know*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. **wo(o)t**; neg. **not**; 2. **wo(o)st**; with per-  
sonal pronoun **wostow**; PLUR. **witen**. PRET. **wiste**; PLUR.  
**wisten**. PAST PART. **wist**.

## PREPOSITIONS

**Of** is sometimes contracted to **o**, as in modern Eng. *o'clock*, and **on** to **a**, as in *aboard* = *on board*.

The Northern **til** is equivalent to *to*.

**Th** is assimilated to **t** in **atte** = *at the*.

## DIALECTS

The dialects are Northern, Midland, and Southern, the first of these including also the language of the Scottish Lowlands. The most important dialect with reference to modern English is the East Midland, in whose district lay the two universities, and eventually London. Examples of the various dialects in this book are: Northern: Barbour, *The Bruce* (pp. 238 ff.); Southern: Layamon, *Brut* (pp. 219 ff.); Midland: *The Bestiary* (pp. 316 ff.).

Initial **v** for *f*, and **z** for *s*, are marks of the Southern dialect.

One of the commoner marks of the Northern dialect is **a** for *o* in words like **bald**, *bold*; **gast**, *ghost*; **wa**, *woe*. Others are: initial **s** for *sh*; **k** for *ch* (**kirk**, *church*). The Northern dialect has also a greater tendency to rid itself of inflectional endings and of final unstressed **-e**, has the present participle in **-and(e)** (Midland and Southern **-inde**, **-ende**, **-inge**), and to some extent has a peculiar vocabulary.

For fuller information about the dialects, see Emerson, *Middle English Reader*, 2d ed., New York, 1915, and Skeat, *English Dialects*, Cambridge (Eng.), 1911.

### III. SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

#### LITERARY HISTORY

BALDWIN, *Introduction to English Medieval Literature*. New York and London, 1914.

✓ Cambridge *History of English Literature*, Vols. 1 and 2. Cambridge (Eng.) and New York, 1907, 1908.

JUSSERAND, *Literary History of the English People (from the Origins to the Renaissance)*. New York and London, 1895.

✓ KER, *English Literature: Medieval*. London and New York, 1912.

✓ MORLEY, *English Writers*, Vols. 3-5. 2d ed. London and New York, 1889-1890.

— SCHOFIELD, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*. New York, 1906.

✓ TEN BRINK, *Early English Literature (to Wyclif)*. New York, 1889.

—, *History of English Literature (Wyclif, Chaucer, Earliest Drama, Renaissance)*. New York, 1893.

—, *History of English Literature (from the Fourteenth Century to the Death of Surrey)*. New York, 1896.

See also Wells, under Bibliographies.

#### TRANSLATIONS

PANCOAST and SPAETH, *Early English Poems*. New York, 1911.

RICKERT, *Early English Romances in Verse*. 2 vols. London, 1908.

SHACKFORD, *Legends and Satires from Mediæval Literature*. Boston, 1913.

✓ WESTON, *Romance, Vision, and Satire*. Boston, 1912.

—, *The Chief Middle English Poets: Selected Poems*. Boston, 1914.

#### CHAUCE

✓ HAMMOND, *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual*. New York, 1908.

✓ KITTREDGE, *Chaucer and his Poetry*. Cambridge, 1915.



- ✓ LEGOUIS, *Geoffrey Chaucer*. New York, 1911.
  - ✓ ROOT, *The Poetry of Chaucer*. Boston, 1922.
  - TEN BRINK, *The Language and Versification of Chaucer*. London, 1901.
- See also Wells, under Bibliographies.

#### MIRACLE-PLAYS

- BATES, *The English Religious Drama*. New York and London, 1893.
- ✓ CHAMBERS, *The Mediæval Stage*. 2 vols. London, 1903.
- ✓ DAVIDSON, *Studies in the English Mystery Plays*. New Haven, 1892.
- GAYLEY, *Plays of our Forefathers*. New York, 1907.
- STODDARD, *References for Students of Miracle Plays and Mysteries*. Berkeley (California), 1887.

#### GRAMMAR

- EINENKEL, *Streifzüge durch die Mittelenglische Syntax*. Münster i. W., 1887.
  - MORSBACH, *Mittelenglische Grammatik*, Vol. 1. Halle, 1896.
- See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

#### PROSODY

- KALUZA, *Short History of English Versification*. London and New York, 1911.
  - ✓ SCHIPPER, *History of English Versification*. Oxford, 1910.
- See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

#### DICTIONARIES

- ✓ BRADLEY-STRATMANN, *Old English [Middle English] Dictionary*. London, 1891.
- ✓ MÄTZNER, *Altenglische Sprachproben: Wörterbuch: A—Misbilenen*. Berlin, 1878-1900.
- ✓ MURRAY, *New English Dictionary: A—Unforeseeable, V—Wash, X—end*. Oxford, 1888-1921.

#### KINDRED LITERATURES

- EDWARDES, *Summary of the Literatures of Modern Europe*. London, 1907.
- ✓ GASPARY-OELSNER, *History of Early Italian Literature to the Death of Dante*. London, 1901.

GRÖBER, *Grundriss der Romanischen Philologie*. Strassburg, 1888-1902.

JEANROY, *Les Origines de la Poésie Lyrique en France au Moyen Age*. 2d ed. Paris, 1904.

PARIS, *Littérature Française au Moyen Age*. 4th ed. Paris, 1909.

PETIT DE JULLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature Française*, Vol. 2. Paris, 1896.

## GENERAL

ADAMS, *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*. Boston, 1913.

MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle en France*. 2d ed. Paris, 1902.

—, *Religious Art in France, XIII Century*. London and New York, 1913. (Translation of the preceding.)

—, *L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age*. Paris, 1908.

*Oxford History of Music*, Vol. 1. Oxford, 1901.

TAYLOR, *The Mediæval Mind*. 2d ed. 2 vols. London and New York, 1914.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES

WELLS, *Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400*. New Haven, 1916. First Supplement. New Haven, 1919.

This virtually supersedes all the following. In addition to the bibliography, this work gives for each item its date, dialect, manuscripts, sources, etc., with abstracts of all the longer pieces.

BILLINGS, *Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances dealing with English and Germanic Legends, and with the Cycles of Charlemagne and Arthur*. New York, 1901. (*Yale Studies in English*, No. 9.)

GROSS, *Sources and Literature of English History, from the Earliest Times to about 1485*. London and New York, 1900.

*Jahresbericht für Germanische Philologie*. Berlin, Leipzig, 1879 ff. (Each annual volume contains a section on English.)

KÖRTING, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Englischen Literatur*. 5th ed. Münster i. W., 1910.

PAUL, *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie*, 2<sup>1</sup>. 609-718 (index, 2<sup>2</sup>. 345-484). Strassburg, 1893.

WARD, *Catalogue of Romances*. 3 vols. London, 1883-1910.

See also Edwardes, under Kindred Literatures; Hammond, under Chaucer; and Stoddard, under Miracle Plays.

# MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

## ROMANCES

### MALORY, MORTE DARTHUR

Sir Thomas Malory, knight, completed his romance, according to his own statement, between March 4, 1469 and March 3, 1470 (the ninth year of Edward IV). His home was at Newbold Revel, near Coventry, and five and a half miles northwest of Rugby, where he succeeded his father in 1433 or 1434. He was member of Parliament for Warwickshire in 1445, and died March 14, 1470 (according to Kittredge, *Harvard Studies* 5. 88 ff.). His book is mostly derived from a variety of French sources, though he occasionally adapts English poems. Whether the ultimate French originals had been digested into a single work which served as Malory's source has not been determined. The *Morte Darthur* was published by Caxton in 1485, and it is from Sommer's literal reprint that our text is derived.

For the characterization of this romance we may borrow a few sentences from Andrew Lang (*Le Morte Darthur*, ed. Sommer, pp. xiv-xxi): 'There is no more strange fortune in literature than that which blended wild Celtic myths, and a monastic theory of the saintly life, with all of chivalrous adventure, with all of courtesy and gentleness that the Middle Ages could conceive, and handed it on to be the delight of the changing ages. . . . Malory has penned the great and chief romance of his own age and of ours, the story that must endure and must move the *lacrymæ rerum* till man's nature is altered again. . . . The Celtic legends, passed through the French mind, and rendered in Malory's English, have, what Homer lacks, the charm of mystery and distance, the background of the unknown. . . . Malory's book is a very complete and composite picture of a strangely inherited ideal; it is, indeed, "a jumble," but, of all jumbles, the most poetic and the most pathetic. . . . Malory is skilled "to teach men unto strange adventures," to instruct in all courage, chastity, endurance, and true love, nor can we estimate what his influence must have been in training the fathers of Elizabeth's Englishmen. . . . The style of Malory is, of course, based on the fresh and simple manner of his French originals. For an English style of his age, it is particularly fluent. . . . Perhaps it is just because he does follow a French copy, and so is familiar with words derived from the Latin, that Malory possesses his fluency and facility. . . . The manner and matter of Malory make him the most generally known of all old authors, except, of course, the translators of the Bible.'

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Book 18, chaps. 18–20. Based upon the French prose romance of *Lancelot* (first half of the thirteenth century), and the fourteenth-century *Morte Arthur* contained in Harleian MS. 2252 of the British Museum (edited by Bruce for the E. E. T. S.; see also Hemingway's edition, Boston, 1912); but chapter 20 is almost wholly due to Malory. For details concerning the relation of our passage to the French *Lancelot*, see Sommer 3. 10, 222–8, 250; for the text of the OF. original, see *Mort Artu*, ed. Bruce, pp. 74 ff. For the general subject of Lancelot, see Jessie L. Weston's *The Legend of Lancelot du Lac* (London, 1901).

Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* and *Lancelot and Elaine* are founded on Malory.

And so upon a morne they took their horses, and Elayne le Blank with them; and whan they came to Astolat, there were they wel lodged, and had grete chere of Syre Bernard the old baron, and of Sir Tyrre his sone. And so upon the morne, whan Syr Launcelot  
 5 shold<sup>1</sup> departe, fayre Elayne brougt her fader with her, and Sir Lavayne and Sir Tyrre, and thus she said: 'My lord Syr Launcelot, now I see ye wylle departe, now, fayre knyghte and curtois knyghte, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to dye for thy love.' 'What wold ye that I dyd?' said Syr Launcelot. 'I wold have you to my  
 10 husbond,' sayd Elayne. 'Fair damoyssel, I thanke yow,' sayd Syr Launcelot, 'but truly,' sayd he, 'I cast<sup>2</sup> me never to be wedded man.' 'Thenne, fair knyght,' said she, 'wylle ye be my peramour?'<sup>3</sup> 'Jesu defende me,' said Syr Launcelot, 'for thenne I rewarded<sup>4</sup>  
 your fader and your broder ful evylle for their grete goodenes.'  
 15 'Allas,' sayd she, 'thenne must I dye for your love.' 'Ye shal not so,' said Syre Launcelot, 'for wete<sup>5</sup> ye wel, fayr mayden, I myght have ben maryed and<sup>6</sup> I had wolde,<sup>7</sup> but I never applyed me to be maryed yet. But by cause,<sup>8</sup> fair dāmoysel, that ye love me as ye  
 20 somme goodenes, and that is this: that w[h]eresomever ye wille beset<sup>9</sup> youre herte upon somme goode knyghte that wylle wedde yow, I shalle gyve yow togyders<sup>10</sup> a thousand pound yerely, to yow

<sup>1</sup> was to, was about to

<sup>2</sup> intend (*NED.* 44. b)

<sup>3</sup> paramour, illicit lover

<sup>4</sup> should reward (subj.)

<sup>5</sup> wit, know

<sup>6</sup> if

<sup>7</sup> willed, wished

<sup>8</sup> because

<sup>9</sup> set, place

<sup>10</sup> together

and to your heyres. Thus moche will I gyve yow, faire madame, for  
 your kyndenes, and alweyes whyle I lyve to be your owne knyghte.'  
 'Of alle this,' saide the mayden, 'I wille none, for, but-yf<sup>1</sup> ye  
 wille wedde me, or ellys be my peramour at the leest, wete yow wel,  
 Sir Launcelot, my good dayes are done.' 'Fair damoyssel,' sayd Sir  
 Launcelot, 'of these two thynges ye must pardonne me.' Thenne  
 she shryked<sup>2</sup> shyrly,<sup>3</sup> and felle doune in a swoone; and thenne  
 wymmen bare her into her chamber, and there she made overmoche  
 sorowe. And thenne Sir Launcelot wold departe; and there he asked  
 Sir Lavayn what he wold doo. 'What shold I doo,' said Syre Lavayne,  
 'but folowe yow, but-yf ye dryve me from yow, or commaunde me  
 to goo from yow?' . . .

Thenne Sir Launcelot took his leve, and soo they departed, and  
 came unto Wynchestre. And whan Arthur wyste<sup>4</sup> that Syr Launcelot  
 was come, hole<sup>5</sup> and sound, the kynge maade grete joye of hym, and  
 soo dyd Sir Gawayn, and all the knyghtes of the Round Table excepte  
 Sir Agravayn and Sire Mordred. Also Quene Guenever was woode<sup>6</sup>  
 wrothe with Sir Launcelot, and wold by no meanes speke with hym,  
 but enstraunged<sup>7</sup> herself from hym, and Sir Launcelot made alle the  
 meanes that he myght for to speke with the quene, but hit wolde  
 not be.

Now speke we of the fayre mayden of Astolat, that made suche  
 sorowe daye and nyght that she never slepte, ete, nor drank; and  
 ever she made her complaynt unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had  
 thus endured a ten dayes, that she febled so<sup>8</sup> that she must nedes  
 passe out of thys world, thenne she shryved<sup>9</sup> her clene, and receyved  
 her Creatoure.<sup>10</sup> And ever she complayned style upon Sire Launcelot.  
 Thenne her ghostly<sup>11</sup> fader bad her leve suche thoughtes. Thenne  
 she sayd: 'Why shold I leve suche thoughtes? Am I not an erthely  
 woman? And alle the whyle the brethe is in my body I may com-  
 playne me, for my byleve is I doo none offence though I love an  
 erthely man, and I take God to my record I loved none but Sir  
 Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a clene mayden I am for

<sup>1</sup> unless<sup>2</sup> shrieked<sup>3</sup> shrilly<sup>4</sup> knew<sup>5</sup> This is direct from OE. *hāl*<sup>6</sup> mad(ly)<sup>7</sup> estranged<sup>8</sup> grew so weak<sup>9</sup> confessed and received absolution<sup>10</sup> the sacrament<sup>11</sup> spiritual

hym and for alle other. And sythen <sup>1</sup> hit is the sufferaunce <sup>2</sup> of God that I shalle dye for the love of soo noble a knyghte, I byseche the hyghe Fader of heven to have mercy upon my sowle, and [that] myn innumerable paynes that I suffred may be allygeaunce <sup>3</sup> of parte of  
 5 my synnes. For swete Lord Jesu,' sayd the fayre mayden, 'I take the to record, on the <sup>4</sup> I was never grete offenser ageynst thy lawes, but that I loved this noble knyght Sire Launcelot out of mesure, and of myself, good Lord, I myght not withstande the fervent love wherfor <sup>5</sup> I have my dethe.' And thenne she called her fader Sire Bernard,  
 10 and her broder Sir Tyrre, and hertely she praid her fader that her broder myght wryte a letter lyke as she did endyte hit; and so her fader graunted her. And whan the letter was wryten word by word lyke as she devysed, thenne she prayd her fader that she myght be watched untyl she were dede. 'And whyle my body is hote, <sup>6</sup> lete this  
 15 letter be putt in my ryght hand, and my hande bounde fast with the letter untyl that I be cold, and lete me be putte in a fayre bedde, with alle the rychest clothes that I have aboute me, and so lete my bedde and alle my rychest clothes be laide with me in a charyot unto the next place where Temse <sup>7</sup> is, and there lete me be putte within a  
 20 barget, <sup>8</sup> and but one man with me, suche as ye trust to stere me thyder, and that my barget be covered with blak samyte, <sup>9</sup> over and over. Thus, fader, I byseche yow, lete hit be done.' Soo her fader graunted hit her feythfully, alle thyng shold be done lyke as she had devysed. Thenne her fader and her broder made grete dole, <sup>10</sup> for,  
 25 when this was done, anone <sup>11</sup> she dyed. And soo whan she was dede, the corps, and the bedde, alle was ledde the next way unto Temse, and there a man, and the corps, and alle, were put into Temse, and soo the man styred <sup>12</sup> the barget unto Westmynster, and there he rowed a grete whyle to and fro or <sup>13</sup> ony aspyed hit.  
 30 Soo by fortune Kynge Arthur and the Quene Guenever were spekyng togydres at a wyndowe; and soo as they loked into Temse, they aspyed this blak barget, and hadde merveylle what it mente. Thenne

<sup>1</sup> since (<sithens, sithence)

<sup>2</sup> permission

<sup>3</sup> alleviation

<sup>4</sup> toward thee

<sup>5</sup> because of which

<sup>6</sup> hot, warm

<sup>7</sup> Thames

<sup>8</sup> barge

<sup>9</sup> samite, rich silk

<sup>10</sup> lamentation

<sup>11</sup> immediately (in one, i.e. minute)

<sup>12</sup> steered

<sup>13</sup> ere, before

the kynge called Sire Kay, and shewed hit hym. 'Sir,' said Sir Kay, 'wete you wel there is some newe tydynges.' 'Goo thyder,' sayd the kynge to Sir Kay, 'and take with yow Sire Brandyles and Agravayne, and brynge me redy word what is there.' Thenne these four knyghtes departed, and came to the barget, and wente in; and there they fond 5 the fayrest corps lyenge in a ryche bedde, and a poure man sitting in the bargets ende, and no word wold he speke. Soo these foure knyghtes retorned unto the kyng ageyne, and told hym what they fond. 'That fayr corps wylle I see,' sayd the kynge. And soo thenne the kyng took the quene by the hand, and went thydder. Thenne the 10 kynge made the barget to be holden fast; and thenne the kyng and pe quene entred, with certayn knyghtes wyth them. And there he sawe the fayrest woman lye in a ryche bedde, coverd unto her myddel with many ryche clothes, and alle was of clothe of gold, and she lay as though she had smyled. Thenne the quene aspyed a letter in her 15 ryght hand, and told it to the kynge. Thenne the kynge took it, and sayd: 'Now am I sure this letter wille telle what she was, and why she is come hydder.' Soo thenne the kynge and the quene wente oute of the barget, and soo commaunded a certayne<sup>1</sup> wayte upon the barget. And soo whan the kynge was come within his chamber, he 20 called many knyghtes aboute hym, and saide that he wold wete openly what was wryten within that letter. Thenne the kynge brake it, and made a clerke<sup>2</sup> to rede hit; and this was the entente<sup>3</sup> of the letter: 'Moost noble knyghte, Sir Launcelot, now hath dethe made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fayre 25 mayden of Astolat; therfor unto alle ladyes I make my mone; yet praye for my soule, and bery me atte leest, and offre ye my massepeny.\* This is my last request. And a clene mayden I dyed, I take God to wytnes. Pray for my soule, Sir Launcelot, as thou art pierles.<sup>5</sup>' This was alle the substance in the letter. And whan it was redde, the 30 kyng, the quene, and alle the knyghtes wepte for pyte of the doleful complayntes. Thenne was Sire Launcelot sente for. And whan he was come, Kynge Arthur made the letter to be redde to hym; and whanne Sire Launcelot herd hit word by word, he sayd: 'My lord

<sup>1</sup> certain person (or persons)<sup>2</sup> learned man, scholar (Lat. *clericus*)<sup>3</sup> meaning, substance<sup>4</sup> funeral dues<sup>5</sup> peerless

Arthur, wete ye wel I am ryghte hevvy<sup>1</sup> of the dethe of this fair damoyssel. God knoweth I was never causer of her dethe by my wyllynge, and that wille I reporte me<sup>2</sup> to her own broder; here he is, Sir Lavayne. I wille not saye nay,' sayd Syre Launcelot, 'but that  
 5 she was bothe fayre and good, and moche I was beholden unto her; but she loved me out of mesure.' 'Ye myght have shewed her,' sayd the quene, 'somme bounte and gentilnes, that myghte have preserved her lyf.' 'Madame,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'she wold none other wayes be ansuerd, but that she wold be my wyf, outh<sup>3</sup> els my peramour,  
 10 and of these two I wold not graunte her; but I proferd her, for her good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yerly to her and to her heyres, and to<sup>4</sup> wedde ony manere knyghte<sup>5</sup> that she coude fynde best to love in her herte. For, madame,' said Sir Launcelot, 'I love not to be constrayned to love; for love muste aryse of the herte, and  
 15 not by no constraynte.' 'That is trouthe,' sayd the kynge, and many knyghtes; 'love is free in hymselfe, and never wille be bounden, for where he is bounden he looseth hymself.' Thenne sayd the kynge unto Sire Launcelot: 'Hit wyl be your worshyp<sup>6</sup> that ye oversee<sup>7</sup> that she be entered<sup>8</sup> worshypfully.' 'Sire,' sayd Sire Launcelot, 'that  
 20 shalle be done as I can best devyse.' And soo many knyghtes yede<sup>9</sup> thyder to behold that fayr mayden. And soo upon the morne she was entered rychely, and Sir Launcelot offryd her masse-peny, and all the knyghtes of the Table Round that were there at that tyme offryd with Syr Launcelot. And thenne the povre man wente ageyne with  
 25 the barget. Thenne the quene sente for Syr Launcelot, and prayd hym of mercy,<sup>10</sup> for why<sup>11</sup> that she had ben wrothe with hym causeles. 'This is not the fyrste tyme,' said Sir Launcelot, 'that ye have ben displeasyd with me causeles; but, madame, ever I must suffre yow, but what sorowe I endure I take no force.'<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sorrowful<sup>2</sup> refer (by way of appeal)<sup>3</sup> or<sup>4</sup> that she might<sup>5</sup> of knight (for an explanation see *NED*. s.v. *kin*, 6.b)<sup>6</sup> to your credit<sup>7</sup> provide<sup>8</sup> interred<sup>9</sup> went<sup>10</sup> besought his pardon<sup>11</sup> because<sup>12</sup> I do not mind



## TRISTRAM AND ISOLDE: THE LOVE-DRINK

Book 8, chaps. 23, 24. Based upon the O.F. thirteenth-century romance of *Tristan*, 'which has been printed oftener than any other romance'; see Sommer 3. 9, 286.

Thenne Kynge Anguysshe and Syre Tristram toke theire leve, and sailed into Irland with grete noblesse<sup>1</sup> and joye. Soo whanne they were in Irland, the kynge lete<sup>2</sup> make it knowen<sup>3</sup> thoroute alle the land, how and in what manere Syre Trystram had done for hym. Thenne the quene and alle that there were made the moost of hym 5 that they myghte. But the joye that La Beale Isoud made of Syr Tristram there myghte no tonge telle, for of alle men erthely she loved hym moost.

Thenne, upon a daye, Kynge Anguysshe asked Syr Tristram why he asked not his bone,<sup>4</sup> for whatsoever he had promysed hym he 10 should have hit withoute fayle. 'Syre,' sayd Sire Trystram, 'now is hit tyme; this is alle that I wylle desyre, that ye wylle gyve me La Beale Isoud youre doughter, not for myself, but for myn unkel Kynge Marke, that shalle have her to wyf, for soo have I promysed hym.' 'Allas,' said the kynge, 'I had lever<sup>5</sup> than alle the land that I have 15 ye wold wedde her youreself.' 'Syre, and I dyd, than I were shamed for ever in this world, and fals of my promyse. Therefore,' said Sire Trystram, 'I praye you hold your promyse that ye promysed me, for this is my desyre, that ye wylle gyve me La Beale Isoud to goo with me into Cornewaile, for to be wedded to Kynge Marke, myn unkel.' 20 'As for that,' sayd Kynge Anguysshe, 'ye shalle have her with you, to doo with her what it please you, that is for to saye yf that ye lyst<sup>6</sup> to wedde her yourself, that is me levest<sup>7</sup>; and yf ye wille gyve her unto Kynge Marke, youre unkel, that is in youre choyse.'

Soo to make short conclusion, La Beale Isoud was made redy to 25 goo with Syre Trystram, and Dame Bragwayne wente with her for her chyef gentylwoman, with many other. Thenne the quene, Isouds moder, gaf to her and Dame Bragwayne, her doughters gentilwoman,

<sup>1</sup> pomp<sup>2</sup> let<sup>3</sup> caused it to be made known<sup>4</sup> boon<sup>5</sup> rather<sup>6</sup> wish<sup>7</sup> most pleasing

*Tristram*

and unto Governaille, a drynke, and charged them that what day Kynge Marke shold wedde, that same daye they shold gyve hym that drynke, soo that Kynge Marke shold drynke to La Beale Isoud; 'and thenne,' said the quene, 'I undertake eyther shalle love other the dayes of  
 5 their lyf.' Soo this drynke was yeven unto Dame Bragwayne and unto Governaille. And thenne anone Syre Trystram tooke the see and La Beale Isoud; and whan they were in theirre caban, hit happed soo that they were thursty, and they sawe a lytyl flacke[t]<sup>1</sup> of gold stande by them, and hit semed by the coloure and the taste that it  
 10 was noble wyn. Thenne Sire Trystram toke the flacke[t] in his hand, and sayd: 'Madame Isoud, here is the best drynke that ever ye drank, that Dame Bragwayne youre mayden, and Governayle my servaunt, have kepte for themself.' Thenne they lough and made good chere, and eyther dranke to other frely, and they thoughte never drynke  
 15 that ever they dranke to other was soo swete nor soo good. But by that<sup>2</sup> theyr drynke was in their bodyes, they loved eyther other so wel that never theyr love departed, for wele neyther<sup>3</sup> for wo. And thus it happed the love fyrste betwixe Sire Tristram and La Beale Isoud, the whiche love never departed the dayes of their lyf.

### THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL: THE VOW

Book 13, chaps. 6-7. This comes from *La Queste del Saint Graal* (edited by Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club, London, 1864); see Sommer 3. 206, 209, 210.

With the second and third paragraphs of this extract may be compared Tennyson, *Holy Grail* 182 ff., 314 ff.

20 'Now,' sayd the kyng, 'I am sure at this quest of the Sancgreal shalle alle ye of the Table Rounde departe, and never shalle I see yow ageyne hole togyders; therfor I wille see yow alle hole togyders in the medowe of Camelot, to juste and to torneye, that after your dethe men maye speke of hit, that suche good knyghtes were holy<sup>4</sup> togyders  
 25 suche a day.' As unto that counceyll, and at the kynges request, they accorded alle, and toke on their harneis<sup>5</sup> that longed<sup>6</sup> unto justyng.

<sup>1</sup> flask

<sup>2</sup> by the time

<sup>3</sup> nor

<sup>4</sup> wholly

<sup>5</sup> armor

<sup>6</sup> belonged

But alle this mevyng<sup>1</sup> of the kyng was for this entent, for to see Galahalt preved,<sup>2</sup> for the kynge demed<sup>3</sup> he shold not lyghtly<sup>4</sup> come ageyne unto the courte after his departynge. So were they assembled in the medowe, bothe more and lasse.<sup>5</sup> Thenne Syr Galahalt, by the prayer of the kynge and the quene, dyd upon hym a noble jesseraunce,<sup>5</sup> and also he dyd on<sup>6</sup> hys helme, but shelde wold he take none for no prayer of the kyng. And thenne Sir Gawayne and other knyghtes praid hym to take a spere. Ryghte soo he dyd; and the quene was in a toure with alle her ladyes for to behold that turnement. Thenne Sir Galahalt dressid hym<sup>7</sup> in myddes<sup>8</sup> of the medowe, and began to<sup>10</sup> breke speres merveyllously, that all men had wonder of hym, for he there surmounted<sup>9</sup> alle other knyghtes, for within a whyle he had defouled<sup>10</sup> many good knyghtes of the Table Round sauf<sup>11</sup> tweyne, that was Syr Launcelot and Sire Percyvale.

Thenne the kyng, at the quenes request, made hym to alyghte and<sup>15</sup> to unlace his helme, that the quene mygt see hym in the vysage. Whanne she beheld hym, she sayd: 'Sothely,<sup>12</sup> I dar wel say that Sir Launcelot begat hym, for never two men resembled more in lykenes, therfor it nys no merweyle though he be of grete prowess.' So a lady that stode by the quene said: 'Madame, for Goddes sake,<sup>20</sup> oughte he of ryghte to be so good a knyghte?' 'Ye,<sup>13</sup> forsothe,' said the quene, 'for he is of alle partyes<sup>14</sup> come of the best knyghtes of the world, and of the hyhest lygnage<sup>15</sup>; for Sir Launcelot is come but of the eighth degre from oure Lord Jesu Cryst, and Syre Galahalt is of the nynthe degre from oure Lord Jesu Cryst; therfor I dar saye<sup>25</sup> they be the grettest gentilmen of the world.' And thenne the kynge

<sup>1</sup> suggestion (moving)<sup>2</sup> proved, tried<sup>3</sup> supposed<sup>4</sup> readily<sup>5</sup> less<sup>6</sup> put on; cf. *undo*<sup>7</sup> made ready<sup>8</sup> the midst<sup>9</sup> surpassed<sup>10</sup> trodden down, overthrown<sup>11</sup> save, except<sup>12</sup> in truth<sup>13</sup> yea<sup>14</sup> in all respects<sup>15</sup> lineage

5. **jesseraunce**: more correctly, *jazerant*, a word of Saracenic origin (found in the name *Algiers*), occurring in OF. in the *Chanson de Roland*; it signifies (*NED.*): 'A light coat of armor, composed of splints or small plates of metal riveted to each other, or to a lining of some stout material.' Scott (*Quentin Durward*) calls it a 'flexible shirt of linked mail.'

24. **Cryst**: 'the first true gentleman that ever breathed' (Dekker). The sentence, from 'for Sir Launcelot' to 'world,' is original with Malory.

and al estates<sup>1</sup> wente home unto Camelot, and soo wente to evensonge to the grete mynster. And soo after upon that to souper, and every knygt sette in his owne place as they were toforehand. Thenne anone they herd crakynge and cryenge of thonder, that hem thought the place shold alle todryve.<sup>2</sup> In the myddes of this blast entred a sonne-beaume more clerer by seven tymes than ever they sawe daye, and al they were alyghted of the grace of the Holy Ghoost. Thenne beganne every knyghte to behold other, and eyther sawe other by theire semynge fayrer than ever they sawe afore. Not for thenne<sup>3</sup> there was no knyght myghte speke one word a grete whyle, and soo they loked every man [o]n other, as they had ben dome.<sup>4</sup> Thenne ther entred into the halle the Holy Graile, coverd with whyte samyte, but ther was none myghte see hit, nor who bare hit. And there was al the halle fulfilled<sup>5</sup> with good odoures, and every knygt had suche metes and drynkes as he best loved in this world. And whan the Holy Grayle had be<sup>6</sup> borne thurgh the halle, thenne the holy vessel departed sodenly, that they wyste not where hit becam.<sup>7</sup> Thenne had they alle brethe to speke. And thenne the kynge yelded<sup>8</sup> thankynges to God of his good grace that he had sente them. 'Certes,' said the kynge, 'we oughte to thanke oure Lord Jesu gretely, for that he hath shewed us this daye, atte reverence of this hyhe feest of Pentecost.' 'Now,' said Sir Gawayn, 'we have ben served this daye of what metes and drynkes we thoughte on, but one thyng begyled us — we myght not see the Holy Grayle, it was soo precyously coverd; wherfor I wil make here avowe<sup>9</sup> that to-morne,<sup>10</sup> withoute lenger<sup>11</sup> abydyng,<sup>12</sup> I shall laboure in the quest of the Sancgreal, that I shalle hold me oute a twelvemoneth and a day, or more yf nede be, and never shalle I retorne ageyne unto the courte tyl I have sene hit more openly than hit hath ben sene here; and yf I may not spede,<sup>13</sup> I shall retorne ageyne, as he that maye not be ageynst the wil of our Lord Jesu Cryste.' Whan they of the Table Round herde Syr Gawayne saye so, they arose up the most party,<sup>14</sup> and maade suche avowes as Sire Gawayne had made.

<sup>1</sup> ranks, degrees<sup>2</sup> burst asunder<sup>3</sup> nevertheless<sup>4</sup> dumb<sup>5</sup> filled<sup>6</sup> been<sup>7</sup> went<sup>8</sup> gave<sup>9</sup> vow<sup>10</sup> to-morrow<sup>11</sup> longer<sup>12</sup> delay<sup>13</sup> succeed<sup>14</sup> most part, greater number

Anone as Kyng Arthur herd this, he was gretely dyspleasyd, for he wyste wel they myghte not ageynesaye <sup>1</sup> theyre avowes. 'Allas!' said Kyng Arthur unto Sir Gawayn, 'ye have nyghe slayne me with the avowe and promesse that ye have made. For thurgh yow ye have berafte <sup>2</sup> me the fayrest felauship and the truest of knyghthode that ever were sene togyders in ony realme of the world. For whanne they departe from hens, I am sure they alle shalle never mete more in thys world, for they shalle dye many in the quest. And soo it forthynketh <sup>3</sup> me a lytel, for I have loved them as wel as my lyf.'

KING HORN *wellis p. 8*

The romance probably antedates 1250; the Cambridge manuscript (1530 lines), here followed, may be dated about 1310. The best edition is by Joseph Hall (Oxford, 1901).

The story is of a prince, who, set adrift by conquering Saracens, lands in Westernesse, is loved by the king's daughter of that country, is banished when his love is discovered, returns in time to save her from another marriage, wins her for himself, and finally becomes king of his native land.

According to Hall (pp. liii-lvi): '*King Horn* is essentially English, a plain impersonal tale, picturing a simple state of society, and full of primitive touches centuries older than its language, written in a metre which is a natural development of Old English prosody. . . . [The] poem, as we have it, is a story of the Danish raids on the south coast of England. It is, in the main, Teutonic in spirit and details: the names of the persons and places are mostly Teutonic, or assimilated to Teutonic forms. . . . Rimenhild and Aylmar, and his court on the banks of the Dorsetshire Stour, are English additions to the original story, and the real Westernesse is Ireland. Then all the localities and surroundings are Celtic. Murry . . . is king of Suddene, the country of the Southern Damnonii, that is, of Cornwall. . . . The banished Horn finds shelter at the court of an Irish king; with Irish troops, and accompanied by an Irish page, he recovers his father's kingdom. His rival is a Breton prince, Modi, king of Renns. These indications point to the conclusion that the story is originally a British tradition, arising out of some temporary success in which the Cornish, aided by the Irish, checked the westward progress of the English invader. It was annexed by some English poet, and recast to suit the similar position of his countrymen resisting the attacks of the Danes. Finally, it emerged at a much later date in the shape of the extant versions, under the impulse of the rising spirit of the English people recovering from the Norman Conquest, which found its peculiar literary expression in a whole cycle of outlaw and exile stories in verse and prose.

<sup>1</sup> retract, break<sup>2</sup> bereft, deprived (with two accusatives)<sup>3</sup> grieves

'The literary interest of *King Horn* may be characterized in few words. It is probably the earliest of the English romances, but as a specimen of the purely narrative sort it has great merit. In swift succession of brief and incisive speeches it tells a simple story effectively, without distraction of elaborate description or reflective comment. But the characters are very simply conceived, the female element is slight, and lovemaking is quite subordinate to fighting. Although picturesque and even poetic situations, such as Horn's farewell to his boat, are not wanting, the language is bald and unimaginative. A certain epic simplicity and energetic directness of expression, to which the short verse lends itself, are the main merits of its style.'

Our extract runs from line 445 to line 586. The earlier course of the story is as follows: Saracens kill King Murry of Suddene, and set adrift the young prince, Horn, and his companions. The latter are carried over the water to Westernesse, where King Aylmar receives them kindly, and bids the steward Athelbrus teach Horn the arts of harping and song, and train him to serve the wine and carve at table. Horn is soon loved by all the court, but especially by the king's daughter, Rymenhild. She bids the steward bring him to her chamber, but Athelbrus, in dread of the king's anger, brings instead Horn's companion, Athulf. To Athulf she gives her love, supposing him to be Horn, but Athulf finally explains the mistake, and she upbraids the steward. Athelbrus again promises to bring Horn, and this time really does so. Rymenhild declares her love to Horn, and offers to marry him. He gently declines, on the ground that he is unworthy by birth for the honor, whereupon she swoons. Horn is moved by her grief, and suggests that marriage might be possible if he were a knight.

Rymenhild, þat swete þing,  
Wakede of hire swogning.<sup>1</sup>  
'Horn,' quap<sup>2</sup> heo,<sup>3</sup> 'wel<sup>4</sup> sone<sup>5</sup>  
þat schal beon<sup>6</sup> idone<sup>7</sup>:  
5 þu schalt beo<sup>8</sup> dubbed knigt  
Are<sup>9</sup> come seve<sup>10</sup> nigȝt.  
Have her<sup>11</sup> þis cuppe,  
And þis ryng peruppe<sup>12</sup>  
To Aylbrus þe<sup>13</sup> stuard,  
10 And se<sup>14</sup> he holde foreward.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> swoon<sup>2</sup> quoth, said<sup>3</sup> she<sup>4</sup> very: MS. vel<sup>5</sup> soon<sup>6</sup> be<sup>7</sup> done (OE. *gedōn*)<sup>8</sup> be<sup>9</sup> before<sup>10</sup> seven<sup>11</sup> here<sup>12</sup> thereupon, in addition<sup>13</sup> MS. &<sup>14</sup> see (that)<sup>15</sup> keep his promise

7. Have: the Harleian and Laud MSS. have here a word for 'take.'

Seie <sup>1</sup> Ihc him biseche  
 Wiþ loveliche <sup>2</sup> speche  
 Þat he adun <sup>3</sup> falle  
 Bifore þe king in halle,  
 And bidde þe king ariȝte <sup>4</sup> 5  
 Dubbe þe to kniȝte.  
 Wiþ selver and wiþ golde  
 Hit wurþ <sup>5</sup> him wel iȝolde. <sup>6</sup>  
 Crist him lene <sup>7</sup> spede <sup>8</sup>  
 Þin erende <sup>9</sup> to bede. <sup>10</sup> 10  
 Horn tok his leve,  
 For hit was neȝ <sup>11</sup> eve.  
 Aþelbrus he soȝte,  
 And ȝaf <sup>12</sup> him þat <sup>13</sup> he broȝte,  
 And tolde him ful ȝare <sup>14</sup> 15  
 Hu <sup>15</sup> he hadde ifare, <sup>16</sup>  
 And sede <sup>17</sup> him his nede,  
 And bihet <sup>18</sup> him his mede. <sup>19</sup>  
 Aþelbrus also swiþe <sup>20</sup>  
 Went to halle blive. <sup>21</sup> 20  
 'Kyng,' he sede, 'þu leste <sup>22</sup>  
 A tale mid þe beste;  
 Þu schalt bere crune <sup>23</sup>  
 To-moreȝe <sup>24</sup> in þis tune <sup>25</sup>;  
 To-moreȝe is þi feste <sup>26</sup>;  
 Þer <sup>27</sup> bihoveþ <sup>28</sup> geste. <sup>29</sup> 25  
 Hit nere <sup>30</sup> noȝt forloren <sup>31</sup>  
 For to kniȝti <sup>32</sup> Child <sup>33</sup> Horn,

<sup>1</sup> say<sup>2</sup> loving, affectionate<sup>3</sup> down<sup>4</sup> as is right<sup>5</sup> shall be<sup>6</sup> requited<sup>7</sup> grant<sup>8</sup> success<sup>9</sup> mission<sup>10</sup> make known (OE, *ðēodan*)<sup>11</sup> nearly<sup>12</sup> gave<sup>13</sup> that which, what<sup>14</sup> readily, quickly<sup>15</sup> how<sup>16</sup> fared (OE, *gefaren*)<sup>17</sup> said, told<sup>18</sup> promised<sup>19</sup> reward<sup>20</sup> as fast as possible<sup>21</sup> in haste<sup>22</sup> listen<sup>23</sup> crown<sup>24</sup> OE. *tō morgen*<sup>25</sup> town<sup>26</sup> feast<sup>27</sup> for this<sup>28</sup> is fitting<sup>29</sup> entertainment, conspicuous act<sup>30</sup> would not be<sup>31</sup> lost, thrown away, without value<sup>32</sup> knight<sup>33</sup> aspirant to knighthood

þine armes for to welde <sup>1</sup>;  
 God <sup>2</sup> kniȝt he schal ȝelde.' <sup>3</sup>

þe king sede sone :  
 'þat is wel idone —

5      Horn me wel iquemep <sup>4</sup>;  
       God kniȝt him bisemep. <sup>5</sup>  
       He schal have mi dubbing,  
       And afterward [be] mi derling;  
       And alle his feren <sup>6</sup> twelf  
 10     He schal kniȝten himself :  
       Alle he schal hem <sup>7</sup> kniȝte  
       Bifore me þis niȝte.'

      Til þe lȝt of day sprang  
       Ailmar him þuȝte <sup>8</sup> lang.

15     þe day bigan to springe;  
       Horn com <sup>9</sup> bivore þe kinge  
       Mid his twelf yfere <sup>10</sup> —  
       Sume hi <sup>11</sup> were lūpere. <sup>12</sup>  
       Horn he dubbede to kniȝte,  
 20     Wiþ swerd and spures briȝte.  
       He sette him on a stede <sup>13</sup> whit;  
       þer nas no kniȝt hym ilik. <sup>14</sup>  
       He smot him a litel wiȝt, <sup>15</sup>  
       And bed <sup>16</sup> him beon a god kniȝt.

25     Apulf fel a <sup>17</sup> knes þar <sup>18</sup>  
       Bivore þe king Aylmar.  
       'King,' he sede, 'so kene, <sup>19</sup>  
       Grante me a bene <sup>20</sup>;  
       Nu <sup>21</sup> is kniȝt Sire Horn  
 30     þat in Suddenne <sup>22</sup> was iboren <sup>23</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> wield

<sup>2</sup> good, valorous

<sup>3</sup> turn out, become

<sup>4</sup> pleases

<sup>5</sup> he seems

<sup>6</sup> companions (OE. *gefēran*)

<sup>7</sup> them

<sup>8</sup> it seemed to Ailmar

<sup>9</sup> came

<sup>10</sup> See l. 9

<sup>11</sup> some of them (some *they*)

<sup>12</sup> wicked

<sup>13</sup> steed

<sup>14</sup> like (OE. *gelīc*)

<sup>15</sup> a little bit, gently

<sup>16</sup> bade

<sup>17</sup> on

<sup>18</sup> there

<sup>19</sup> brave

<sup>20</sup> boon, request

<sup>21</sup> now

<sup>22</sup> See Intr., p. 11

<sup>23</sup> born (OE. *geboren*)



Lord he is of londe  
 Over us þat bi him stonde <sup>1</sup>;  
 Þin armes he hap and scheld,<sup>2</sup>  
 To figte wiþ upon þe feld;  
 Let him us alle knigte,  
 For þat is ure <sup>3</sup> rigte.<sup>5</sup>  
 Aylmar sede sone ywis <sup>4</sup>:  
 'Do nu þat þi wille is.'  
 Horn adun ligte,<sup>6</sup>  
 And makede <sup>6</sup> hem alle knigtes.  
 Murie <sup>7</sup> was þe feste,  
 Al of faire gestes;  
 Ac Rymenhild nas noht þer,  
 And þat hire þugte <sup>8</sup> seve <sup>9</sup> ȝer.<sup>10</sup>  
 After Horn heo <sup>11</sup> sente,  
 And he to bure <sup>12</sup> wente.  
 Nolde he noht go one <sup>13</sup> —  
 Apulf was his mone.<sup>14</sup>  
 Rymenhild on flore stod  
 (Hornes come <sup>15</sup> hire þugte god),  
 And sede: 'Welcome, Sire Horn,  
 And Apulf knigt þe biforn.  
 Knigt, nu is þi time  
 For to sitte bi me;  
 Do nu þat þu er <sup>16</sup> of spake:  
 To þi wif þu me take;  
 Ef <sup>17</sup> þu art trewe of dedes,  
 Do nu ase þu sedes <sup>18</sup>;  
 Nu þu hast wille þine,  
 Unbind <sup>19</sup> me of my pine.'<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> stand<sup>2</sup> shield<sup>3</sup> our<sup>4</sup> certainly, indeed<sup>5</sup> alighted, descended from  
horseback<sup>6</sup> made<sup>7</sup> merry, joyous<sup>8</sup> seemed to her<sup>9</sup> seven<sup>10</sup> years<sup>11</sup> she<sup>12</sup> bower, lady's chamber<sup>13</sup> alone<sup>14</sup> companion (OE. *gemāna*)<sup>15</sup> coming<sup>16</sup> before<sup>17</sup> if<sup>18</sup> saidest<sup>19</sup> set free<sup>20</sup> torment

- 'Rymenhild,' quap he, 'beo stille  
 Ihc wulle<sup>1</sup> don al þi wille.  
 Also<sup>2</sup> hit mot<sup>3</sup> bitide,<sup>4</sup>  
 Mid spere I schal<sup>5</sup> furst ride,  
 5 And mi kniȝthod prove,  
 Ar<sup>6</sup> Ihc þe ginne<sup>7</sup> to woȝe.<sup>8</sup>  
 We beþ<sup>9</sup> kniȝtes ȝonge,  
 Of o<sup>10</sup> dai al isprunge,<sup>11</sup>  
 And of ure mestere<sup>12</sup>  
 10 So<sup>13</sup> is þe manere<sup>14</sup>:  
 Wiþ sume oþere kniȝte  
 Wel for his lemman<sup>15</sup> fiȝte,  
 Or<sup>16</sup> he eni<sup>17</sup> wif take;  
 Forþi<sup>18</sup> me stondeþ<sup>19</sup> þe more rape.<sup>20</sup>  
 15 To-day, so Crist me blesse,  
 Ihc wulle do pruesse<sup>21</sup>  
 For þi lue in þe felde,  
 Mid spere and mid schelde;  
 If Ihc come to lyve,<sup>22</sup>  
 20 Ihc schal þe take to wyve.<sup>23</sup>  
 'Kniȝt,' quap heo, 'trewe,  
 Ihc wene<sup>24</sup> Ihc mai þe leve<sup>25</sup>;  
 Tak nu her þis gold ring,  
 God him is þe dubbing<sup>26</sup>;  
 25 Þer is upon þe ringe  
 Igrave<sup>27</sup> "Rymenhild þe ȝonge."<sup>28</sup>  
 Þer nis non betere anonder<sup>29</sup> sunne,  
 Þat eni man of telle cunne<sup>30</sup>;

1 will  
 2 even so  
 3 must  
 4 befall  
 5 am bound to  
 6 before  
 7 begin  
 8 woo  
 9 are  
 10 one, the same

11 having taken origin (OE. *gesprungen*)  
 12 profession  
 13 thus  
 14 custom  
 15 lady-love  
 16 before  
 17 any  
 18 wherefore  
 19 there exists for me  
 20 haste

21 deeds of valor  
 22 return alive  
 23 wife  
 24 think  
 25 believe, trust  
 26 ornamentation  
 27 engraved  
 28 Read ȝinge (?)  
 29 under  
 30 may be able

For my luve þu hit were,  
 And on þi finger þu hit <sup>1</sup> bere.  
 Þe stones beoþ <sup>2</sup> of suche grace <sup>3</sup>  
 Þat þu ne schalt in none place  
 Of none duntas <sup>4</sup> beon ofdrad, <sup>5</sup> 5  
 Ne <sup>6</sup> on bataille beon amad, <sup>7</sup>  
 Ef þu loke þeran, <sup>8</sup>  
 And þenke upon þi lemman.  
 And Sire Apulf, þi broþer,  
 He schal have anoþer. 10  
 Horn, Ihc þe biseche  
 Wiþ loveliche speche,  
 Crist ȝeve <sup>9</sup> god endinge, <sup>10</sup>  
 Þe aȝen <sup>11</sup> to bringe.  
 Þe kniȝt hire gan <sup>12</sup> kesse, 15  
 And heo him to blesse.  
 Leve at <sup>13</sup> hire he nam, <sup>14</sup>  
 And into halle cam.

## HAVELOK THE DANE

13  
 13

Composed before 1300; the unique manuscript (3001 lines) is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and may be dated about 1310. The English poem is probably a translation of a lost French one. The best recent editions are those by Holthausen (London, 1901) and Skeat (Oxford, 1915).

The story is of an exiled prince of Denmark, who becomes a servant at the English court, marries the princess of that country, and finally succeeds to the thrones of both Denmark and England.

'The historical source of the name and fame, and perhaps of the story of Havelok, has been traced to the life of Olaf Sitricson [see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*], a Danish prince, who, about the middle of the tenth century, reigned for a few years in Northumbria. . . . One of the strongest motives underlying the development of the Havelok legend may well have been political or national, namely, the desire of the Danes to prove their right to sovereignty in England' (Billings, pp. 18, 20).

<sup>1</sup> MS. him

<sup>2</sup> are

<sup>3</sup> power, virtue

<sup>4</sup> blows

<sup>5</sup> afraid

<sup>6</sup> nor

<sup>7</sup> crazed, bewildered (OE. *gemædd*)

<sup>8</sup> upon it

<sup>9</sup> grant

<sup>10</sup> MS. emdinge

<sup>11</sup> back again

<sup>12</sup> began

<sup>13</sup> of

<sup>14</sup> took

The ancient town-seal of Great Grimsby, in Lincolnshire, embodies a manifest allusion to our story. The seal is described at length by J. Hopkin, as quoted in Skeat's edition (pp. liv-lvi), from which the following extract is taken: 'On the right hand of Gryme stands his *protégé* Haveloc ("Habloc"), whom, during one of his mercantile excursions soon after his arrival in Lincolnshire, Gryme had the good fortune to save from imminent danger of shipwreck, and who proved to be the son of Gunter, King of Denmark, and who was therefore conveyed to the British court, where he subsequently received in marriage Goldburgh, the daughter of the British sovereign. Above Gryme is represented a hand, being emblematical of the hand of Providence by which Haveloc was preserved, and near the hand is the star which marks the point where the inscription begins and ends. Haveloc made such a favorable representation of his preserver at the British and Danish courts that he procured for him many honors and privileges. From the British monarch Gryme, who had already realized an abundance of wealth, received a charter, and was made the chief governor of Grimsby; and the Danish sovereign granted to the town an immunity (which is still possessed by the burgesses of Grimsby) from all tolls at the port of Elsinour. Gryme afterwards lived in Grimsby like a petty prince in his hereditary dominions. Above Haveloc is represented a crown, and in his right hand is a battle-axe, the favorite weapon of the Northmen, and in his [left] hand is a ring which he is presenting to the British princess Goldburgh ("Goldebvrgh"), who stands on the left side of Gryme, and whose right hand is held towards the ring. Over her head is a regal diadem, and in her left hand is a sceptre. Sir F. Madden states that it is certain that this seal is at least as old as the time of Edward I (and therefore contemporaneous with the MS.), as the legend is written in a character which after the year 1300 fell into disuse, and was succeeded by the black letter, or Gothic.'

The mention of Elsinore (Elsineur) suggests the name of Hamlet; for the connection between his story and that of Havelok, see the introduction to Israel Gollancz's *Hamlet in Iceland* (London, 1898).

Our extract embraces lines 862-1281.

The earlier part of the story runs as follows: A good king of England, Athelwold, under whom the realm had been serenely peaceful and happy, lay at the point of death, with only an infant daughter, Goldborough, to succeed him. He called to him his lords and thanes, and bade them tell him to whom he might most safely entrust the kingdom until such time as his daughter could bear rule. They all declared that Earl Godrich was the man; and to him the child and the regency of the country were accordingly committed. But love of power made this man false; when Goldborough was twenty years old, he imprisoned her in a strong castle, and himself continued to rule.

Meanwhile, a similar story had been enacted in Denmark. Its king, Birka-beyn, had before his death entrusted his young son and two small daughters to a supposedly faithful vassal, Godard. The latter with his own hands killed two of the children, and ordered a fisherman, Grim, to drown the boy Havelok by the light of the moon. Grim carried Havelok home in a sack; but when he



- þet oþer <sup>1</sup> day he kepte <sup>2</sup> ok <sup>3</sup>  
 Swiþe yerne <sup>4</sup> þe erles kok,  
 Til þat he saw <sup>5</sup> him on þe b[r]igge,  
 And bi him mani fishes ligge.<sup>6</sup>  
 5 þe erles <sup>7</sup> mete havede he bouht  
 Of Cornwaile,<sup>8</sup> and kalde <sup>9</sup> oft :  
 ' Bermen, bermen, hider swiþe <sup>10</sup> ! '  
 Havelok it herde, and was ful bliþe  
 þat he herde ' bermen ' calle ;  
 10 Alle made he hem <sup>11</sup> dun falle  
 þat in his gate <sup>12</sup> yeden <sup>13</sup> and stode,<sup>14</sup>  
 Wel sixtene laddes gode.  
 Als <sup>15</sup> he lep <sup>16</sup> þe kōk [un-]til,<sup>17</sup>  
 He shof hem alle upon an hyl <sup>18</sup> ;  
 15 Astirte <sup>19</sup> til him with his rippe,<sup>20</sup>  
 And bigan þe fish to kippe.<sup>21</sup>  
 He bar up wel a cartelode  
 Of segges,<sup>22</sup> laxes,<sup>23</sup> of playces <sup>24</sup> brode,<sup>25</sup>  
 Of grete laumprees,<sup>26</sup> and of eles <sup>27</sup> ;  
 20 Sparede he neyþer tos ne heles  
 Til þat he to þe castel cam,  
 þat men fro him his birþene <sup>28</sup> nam.<sup>29</sup>  
 þan men haveden <sup>30</sup> holpen <sup>31</sup> him down  
 With þe birþene of his croun,<sup>32</sup>  
 25 þe kok [bi] stod, and on him low,<sup>33</sup>  
 And þou[h]te him stalworþe man ynow,<sup>34</sup>  
 And seyde : ' Wiltu <sup>35</sup> ben wit[h] me ?

<sup>1</sup> second<sup>2</sup> kept watch for; MS. kepte he<sup>3</sup> also<sup>4</sup> very eagerly<sup>5</sup> MS. say<sup>6</sup> lying (to lie)<sup>7</sup> MS. herles<sup>8</sup> MS. cornwalie<sup>9</sup> called<sup>10</sup> quickly<sup>11</sup> them<sup>12</sup> way<sup>13</sup> went<sup>14</sup> stood<sup>15</sup> as<sup>16</sup> leaped<sup>17</sup> unto<sup>18</sup> heap<sup>19</sup> leaped<sup>20</sup> fish-basket<sup>21</sup> take up quickly<sup>22</sup> cuttlefish<sup>23</sup> salmon<sup>24</sup> plaice<sup>25</sup> broad<sup>26</sup> lampreys<sup>27</sup> eels<sup>28</sup> burden<sup>29</sup> took<sup>30</sup> had<sup>31</sup> helped<sup>32</sup> crown, head<sup>33</sup> laughed<sup>34</sup> enough<sup>35</sup> wilt thou

Gladlike<sup>1</sup> wile Ich feden þe;  
 Wel is set<sup>2</sup> þe mete þu etes,<sup>3</sup>  
 And þe hire þat þu getes.  
 'Goddot<sup>4</sup> l' quoth he, 'leve<sup>5</sup> sire,  
 Bidde<sup>6</sup> Ich you non oþer hire;  
 But yevep<sup>7</sup> me inow to ete,  
 Fir<sup>8</sup> and water Y wile you fete,<sup>9</sup>  
 Þe fir blowe, an[d] ful wele maken;  
 Stickes kan Ich breken and kraken,<sup>10</sup>  
 And kindlen [ek]<sup>11</sup> ful wei a fyr,  
 And maken it to brennen<sup>12</sup> shir<sup>13</sup>;  
 Ful wel kan Ich cleven<sup>14</sup> shides,<sup>15</sup>  
 Eles toturven<sup>16</sup> of here<sup>17</sup> hides;  
 Ful wel kan Ich dishes swilen,<sup>18</sup>  
 And don al þat ye evere wilen.<sup>19</sup>  
 Quoth þe kok: 'Wile I no more;  
 Go þu<sup>20</sup> yunder, and sit þore,<sup>21</sup>  
 And Y shal yeve þe ful fair bred,  
 And make þe broys<sup>22</sup> in þe led.<sup>23</sup>  
 Sit now down and et<sup>24</sup> ful yerne;  
 Dapeit hwo<sup>25</sup> þe mete werne<sup>26</sup> l',  
 Havelok sette him dun anon<sup>27</sup>  
 Also<sup>28</sup> stille als<sup>29</sup> a ston,  
 Til he haveðe ful wel eten;  
 Þo<sup>30</sup> haveðe Havelok fayre geten.<sup>31</sup>  
 Hwan he haveðe eten inow,  
 He kam to þe welle, water updrow,  
 And filde þe[r] a michel<sup>32</sup> so<sup>33</sup>;

1 gladly  
 2 bestowed  
 3 eatest  
 4 God wot l MS. soddot  
 5 dear  
 6 ask, pray  
 7 give  
 8 fire  
 9 fetch  
 10 crack  
 11 also

12 burn  
 13 brightly  
 14 cleave  
 15 thin pieces of wood  
 16 strip (*NED. s.v. tirve*)  
 17 their  
 18 wash  
 19 wish  
 20 thou  
 21 there  
 22 brewis, broth

23 caldron, kettle  
 24 eat  
 25 a curse upon him who  
 26 denies  
 27 straightway  
 28 as  
 29 then  
 30 done well  
 31 large  
 32 tub

- Bad he non ageyn <sup>1</sup> him go ;  
 Bitwen <sup>2</sup> hjs hondes he bar it in,  
 A[l] him one, <sup>3</sup> to þe kichin.  
 Bad he non him water to fete,  
 5 Ne <sup>4</sup> fro b[r]igge to bere þe mete.  
 He bar þe turves, <sup>5</sup> he bar þe star, <sup>6</sup>  
 þe wode fro the brigge he bar ;  
 Al that evere shulde <sup>7</sup> he nytte, <sup>8</sup>  
 Al he drow, <sup>9</sup> and al he kitte <sup>10</sup> ;  
 10 Wolde he nevere haven rest,  
 More þan he were <sup>11</sup> a best. <sup>12</sup>  
 Of alle men was he mest <sup>13</sup> meke,  
 Lauhwinde <sup>14</sup> ay, and bliþe of speke <sup>15</sup> ;  
 Evere he was glad and bliþe,  
 15 His sorwe <sup>16</sup> he couþe <sup>17</sup> ful wel miþe. <sup>18</sup>  
 It ne was <sup>19</sup> non so litel knave, <sup>20</sup>  
 For to leyken, <sup>21</sup> ne for to plawe, <sup>22</sup>  
 þat he ne wo[l]de with him pleye <sup>23</sup> ;  
 þe children that y[e]den in þe weie  
 20 Of him he <sup>24</sup> deden <sup>25</sup> al he[r] wille,  
 And with him leykeden here <sup>26</sup> fille.  
 Him loveden alle, stille and bolde,  
 Knictes, children, yunge and olde <sup>27</sup> ;  
 Alle him loveden þat him sowen, <sup>28</sup>  
 25 Boþen heye <sup>29</sup> men and lowe.  
 Of him ful wide þe word sprong,  
 Hu <sup>30</sup> he was mike[l], <sup>31</sup> hu <sup>32</sup> he was strong,  
 Hu fayr man God him haveþe made, <sup>32</sup>

<sup>1</sup> opposite<sup>2</sup> MS. but bitwen<sup>3</sup> alone<sup>4</sup> nor<sup>5</sup> turf, peat<sup>6</sup> a kind of sedge or reed<sup>7</sup> MS. shulden<sup>8</sup> require for use<sup>9</sup> drew<sup>10</sup> cut ; MS. citte<sup>11</sup> if he were (subj.)<sup>12</sup> beast<sup>13</sup> most<sup>14</sup> laughing<sup>15</sup> speech<sup>16</sup> sorrow<sup>17</sup> could<sup>18</sup> conceal<sup>19</sup> there was<sup>20</sup> lad, boy<sup>21</sup> frolic<sup>22</sup> sport<sup>23</sup> play<sup>24</sup> they<sup>25</sup> did<sup>26</sup> their<sup>27</sup> MS. holde<sup>28</sup> saw<sup>29</sup> high<sup>30</sup> how ; MS. hw<sup>31</sup> tall<sup>32</sup> made



But-on þat<sup>1</sup> he was almost naked :  
 For he ne havede nouht to shride<sup>2</sup>  
 But a kouel<sup>3</sup> ful unride,<sup>4</sup>  
 Þat [was] ful<sup>5</sup> and swiþe wicke,<sup>6</sup>  
 Was it nouht worth a fir-sticke.  
 Þe cok bigan of him to rewe,<sup>7</sup>  
 And bouhte<sup>8</sup> him cloþes, al span-newe<sup>9</sup> ;  
 He bouhte<sup>8</sup> him boþe hosen and shon,  
 And sone dide him don es on.<sup>10</sup>

5

Hwan he was cloþed, [h]osed, and shod.

10

Was non so fayr under God,  
 Þat evere yete in erþe were,<sup>11</sup>  
 Non þat evere moder<sup>12</sup> bere<sup>13</sup> ;  
 It<sup>14</sup> was nevere man þat yemed<sup>15</sup>  
 In kineriche,<sup>16</sup> þat so wel semede<sup>17</sup>

15

King or cayser for to be ;  
 Þan<sup>18</sup> he was shrid,<sup>19</sup> so semede<sup>20</sup> he ;  
 For þanne<sup>18</sup> he<sup>21</sup> weren alle samen<sup>22</sup>

At Lincolne, at þe gamen,<sup>23</sup>

And þe erles men woren<sup>24</sup> al[le] þore,<sup>25</sup>

20

Þan was Havelok bi þe shuldren<sup>26</sup> more<sup>27</sup>

Þan þe meste<sup>28</sup> þat þer kam ;

In armes him no man [ne] nam

Þat he doune sone ne caste ;

Havelok stod over hem als a mast.

25

Als he was heie, so<sup>29</sup> he was strong,<sup>30</sup>

He was boþe stark<sup>31</sup> and long<sup>32</sup> ;

In Engelond [was] non hise per<sup>33</sup>

<sup>1</sup> except in one respect, that

<sup>2</sup> to clothe himself

<sup>3</sup> garment

<sup>4</sup> rough

<sup>5</sup> foul

<sup>6</sup> mean

<sup>7</sup> have pity

<sup>8</sup> bought

<sup>9</sup> quite new

<sup>10</sup> made him put them on

<sup>11</sup> was

<sup>12</sup> mother

<sup>13</sup> bore

<sup>14</sup> there

<sup>15</sup> governed

<sup>16</sup> kingdom ; MS. kinneriche

<sup>17</sup> was fit

<sup>18</sup> when

<sup>19</sup> clothed

<sup>20</sup> seemed

<sup>21</sup> they

<sup>22</sup> together

<sup>23</sup> games

<sup>24</sup> were

<sup>25</sup> there

<sup>26</sup> shoulders

<sup>27</sup> taller

<sup>28</sup> tallest

<sup>29</sup> MS. al

<sup>30</sup> MS. long

<sup>31</sup> sturdy

<sup>32</sup> MS. strong

<sup>33</sup> peer, equal

Of strengþe þat evere kam him ner.<sup>1</sup>  
 Als he was strong, so was he softe<sup>2</sup>;  
 Þey<sup>3</sup> a man him misdede<sup>4</sup> ofte,  
 Nevere more he him misseyde,<sup>5</sup>  
 5 Ne hond on him with yvele leyde.  
 Of bodi was he mayden clene;  
 Nevere yete in garth,<sup>6</sup> ne in grene,  
 Wit[h] hire<sup>7</sup> ne wolde [he] leyke ne lye,  
 No more þan it were a strie.<sup>8</sup>  
 10 In þat time al Engeland<sup>9</sup>  
 Þerl<sup>10</sup> Godrich havede in his hond,  
 And he gart<sup>11</sup> komen into þe tun<sup>12</sup>  
 Mani erl and mani barun;  
 And alle [men] þat lives<sup>13</sup> were  
 15 In Eng[e]lond, þanne wer þere,  
 Þat þey haveden after sent  
 To ben þer at þe parlement.  
 With hem com mani champioun,<sup>14</sup>  
 Mani wiht<sup>15</sup> ladde,<sup>16</sup> blac, and brown;  
 20 An[d] fel<sup>17</sup> it so þat yunge men,  
 Wel abouten nine or ten,  
 Bigunnen pere<sup>18</sup> for to layke:  
 Þider komen boþe stronge and wayke<sup>19</sup>;  
 Þider komen lesse and more,  
 25 Þat in þe borw<sup>20</sup> þanne weren pore<sup>21</sup>;  
 Chaumpiouns,<sup>22</sup> and starke laddes,  
 Bondemen,<sup>23</sup> with here<sup>24</sup> gaddes,<sup>25</sup>  
 Als he<sup>26</sup> comen fro þe plow;  
 Þere was sembling<sup>27</sup> inow!

<sup>1</sup> near<sup>2</sup> mild, gentle<sup>3</sup> though<sup>4</sup> injured<sup>5</sup> reproached, spoke ill of; MS. misdede<sup>6</sup> garden, enclosure; MS. game<sup>7</sup> her (a woman)<sup>8</sup> old hag<sup>9</sup> MS. Hengelond<sup>10</sup> the earl<sup>11</sup> made, had<sup>12</sup> town<sup>13</sup> alive<sup>14</sup> MS. chambion<sup>15</sup> stout<sup>16</sup> lad<sup>17</sup> happened<sup>18</sup> MS. þe<sup>19</sup> weak<sup>20</sup> borough<sup>21</sup> there<sup>22</sup> MS. chaunpiouns<sup>23</sup> husbandmen<sup>24</sup> their<sup>25</sup> goads<sup>26</sup> they<sup>27</sup> assembling

For it <sup>1</sup> ne was non horse-knave,<sup>2</sup>  
 þou <sup>3</sup> þei sholden in honde have,<sup>4</sup>  
 þat he ne kam þider, þe leyk <sup>5</sup> to se :  
 Biform here fet þanne lay a tre,  
 And putten <sup>6</sup> with a mikel ston 5  
 þe starke laddes, ful god won.<sup>7</sup>  
 þe ston was mikel, and ek <sup>8</sup> gret,  
 And al so hevi so a net <sup>9</sup> ;  
 Grundstalw[u]rþe <sup>10</sup> man he sholde <sup>11</sup> be  
 þat mouhte <sup>12</sup> liften it to his kne ; 10  
 Was þer neyþer clerc ne prest <sup>13</sup>  
 þat mihte <sup>12</sup> liften it to his brest :  
 þerwit[h] <sup>14</sup> putten the chaumpiouns <sup>15</sup>  
 þat þider comen with þe barouns.  
 Hwoso mihte putten þore 15  
 Biform anoþer an inch or more,  
 Wore <sup>16</sup> he yung, wore he old,<sup>17</sup>  
 He was for a kempe <sup>18</sup> told.<sup>19</sup>  
 Also <sup>20</sup> þe[i] stoden, an[d] ofte streden,<sup>21</sup>  
 þe chaumpiouns,<sup>15</sup> and ek the ladden <sup>22</sup> ; 20  
 And he <sup>23</sup> maden mikel strout <sup>24</sup>  
 Abouten þe alþerbeste <sup>25</sup> b[o]ut,<sup>26</sup>  
 Havelok stod, and lokede þertil <sup>27</sup> ;  
 And of puttingge he was ful wil,<sup>28</sup>  
 For nevere yete ne saw he or <sup>29</sup> 25  
 Putten the stone, or <sup>29</sup> þanne þor.  
 Hise mayster bad him gon þerto,

<sup>1</sup> there<sup>2</sup> groom<sup>3</sup> MS. þo<sup>4</sup> Though they (*for* he) should have [work]  
in hand<sup>5</sup> game<sup>6</sup> put ; MS. pulten<sup>7</sup> in considerable numbers (won = plenty)<sup>8</sup> also<sup>9</sup> young ox<sup>10</sup> extremely stalwart<sup>11</sup> had need to<sup>12</sup> could<sup>13</sup> priest<sup>14</sup> with this<sup>15</sup> MS. chaunpiouns<sup>16</sup> were<sup>17</sup> MS. hold<sup>18</sup> knight, champion<sup>19</sup> counted<sup>20</sup> as<sup>21</sup> stared<sup>22</sup> lads<sup>23</sup> they<sup>24</sup> contention<sup>25</sup> best of all<sup>26</sup> bout, throw<sup>27</sup> thereto<sup>28</sup> inexperienced<sup>29</sup> before

- Als he coupe<sup>1</sup> þerwith do.  
 Þo hise mayster it him bad,  
 He was of him sore adrad;  
 Þerto he stirte<sup>2</sup> sone anon,  
 5 And kipte<sup>3</sup> up þat hevi ston,  
 Þat he sholde put[t]en wiþe;  
 He putte, at þe firste siþe,<sup>4</sup>  
 Over<sup>5</sup> alle þat þer wore,  
 Twel[ve] fote,<sup>6</sup> and sumdel<sup>7</sup> more.  
 10 Þe champiouns<sup>8</sup> þat [þat] put sowen,<sup>9</sup>  
 Shuldreden he ilc oþer,<sup>10</sup> and lowen<sup>11</sup>;  
 Wolden he no more to putting gange,  
 But seyde: 'We dwellen her to<sup>12</sup> longe!'
- Þis selkouth<sup>13</sup> mihte nouht ben hyd:  
 15 Ful sone it was ful loude kid<sup>14</sup>  
 Of Havelok, hu<sup>15</sup> he warp<sup>16</sup> þe ston  
 Over þe laddes everilkon<sup>17</sup>;  
 Hu<sup>15</sup> he was fayr, hu<sup>15</sup> he was long,  
 Hu<sup>15</sup> he was wiht,<sup>18</sup> hu<sup>15</sup> he was strong;  
 20 Þorhut<sup>19</sup> England yede þe speke,<sup>20</sup>  
 Hu<sup>15</sup> he was strong, and ek [ful] meke;  
 In the castel, up in þe halle,  
 Þe knihtes speken þerof alle,  
 So that Godrich it herde wel.  
 25 Þe[i] speken of Havelok, everi del,<sup>21</sup>  
 Hu<sup>15</sup> he was strong man and hey,  
 Hu<sup>15</sup> he was strong, and ek [ful] sley<sup>22</sup>;  
 And þouhte<sup>23</sup> Godrich: 'Þoru<sup>24</sup> þis knave  
 Shal Ich Engeland al have,  
 30 And mi sone after me;

<sup>1</sup> could<sup>2</sup> leaped<sup>3</sup> snatched<sup>4</sup> time<sup>5</sup> beyond<sup>6</sup> feet<sup>7</sup> somewhat<sup>8</sup> MS. chaunpiouns<sup>9</sup> saw<sup>10</sup> one another<sup>11</sup> laughed<sup>12</sup> too<sup>13</sup> wonder<sup>14</sup> made known<sup>15</sup> MS. hw<sup>16</sup> threw<sup>17</sup> every one<sup>18</sup> courageous<sup>19</sup> throughout; MS. þoruth<sup>20</sup> speech; MS. speche<sup>21</sup> on every side (?)<sup>22</sup> skilful; MS. fri<sup>23</sup> MS. þouthte<sup>24</sup> through

For so I wile þat it be.  
 King<sup>1</sup> Apelwald me dide<sup>2</sup> swere  
 Upon al þe messe-gere<sup>3</sup>  
 Þat Y shu[ ]de his douhter yive<sup>4</sup>  
 Þe hexte<sup>5</sup> [man] þat mihte live, 5  
 Þe beste, þe fairest, þe strangest<sup>6</sup> ok;  
 Þat gart<sup>7</sup> he me sweren on þe bok.  
 Hwere mihte I finden ani so hey  
 So Havelok is, or so sley?  
 Þou[h] Y souhte heþen<sup>8</sup> into Ynde,<sup>9</sup> 10  
 So fayr, so strong, ne mihte Y finde.  
 Havelok is þat ilke<sup>10</sup> knave  
 Þat shal Goldeborw have.  
 Þis pouhte [he] with trechery,  
 Wit[h] traysoun, and with felony; 15  
 For he wende<sup>11</sup> þat Havelok wore<sup>12</sup>  
 Sum cherles sone, and no more;  
 Ne shulde he haven of Engellond  
 Onlepi<sup>13</sup> forw<sup>14</sup> in his hond  
 With hire þat was þerof [þe] eyr,<sup>15</sup> 20  
 Þat boþe was god and swiþe fair.  
 He wende þat Havelok wer a þral,<sup>16</sup>  
 Þerþoru<sup>17</sup> he wende haven al  
 In Engellond, þat hire riht was;  
 He werse was<sup>18</sup> þan Sathanas 25  
 Þat Jesu Crist in erþe shop<sup>19</sup>;  
 Hanged worþe<sup>20</sup> he on an hok!  
 After Goldebo[r]w sone he sende,  
 Þat was boþe fayr and hende,<sup>21</sup>  
 And dide hire to Lincolne bringe<sup>22</sup>; 30

<sup>1</sup> MS. the king<sup>2</sup> caused<sup>3</sup> utensils of the mass<sup>4</sup> MS. yëve<sup>5</sup> highest, tallest<sup>6</sup> strongest<sup>7</sup> made<sup>8</sup> hence<sup>9</sup> India<sup>10</sup> very<sup>11</sup> supposed<sup>12</sup> was<sup>13</sup> a single<sup>14</sup> furrow<sup>15</sup> heir<sup>16</sup> slave<sup>17</sup> for this reason, by this means<sup>18</sup> MS. was werse<sup>19</sup> shaped, created<sup>20</sup> may he be<sup>21</sup> gentle, courteous<sup>22</sup> and had her brought to Lincoln

Belles dede he ageyn hire <sup>1</sup> ringen,  
 And joie he made hire swiþe mikel,  
 But neþeles <sup>2</sup> he was ful swikel.<sup>8</sup>  
 He seyde þat he sholde hire yive <sup>4</sup>

5 þe fayrest man that mihte live.  
 She answerede and seyde anon,  
 Bi [Jesu] Crist and bi Seint John,<sup>5</sup>  
 þat hire sholde no man wedde,  
 Ne no man bringen hire to <sup>6</sup> bedde,  
 10 But <sup>7</sup> he were king or kinges eyr,  
 Were he nevere man so fayr.

Godrich þe erl was swiþe wroth  
 þat she swor swilk <sup>8</sup> an oth,  
 And seyde: ' Hweþer <sup>9</sup> þou wilt be  
 15 Quen and levedi <sup>10</sup> over me?  
 þou shalt haven a gadeling,<sup>11</sup>  
 Ne shalt þou haven non oþer king;  
 þe shal spusen <sup>12</sup> mi cokes knave;  
 Shalt <sup>13</sup> þou non oþer loverd <sup>14</sup> have.

20 Dapeit þat <sup>15</sup> þe oþer <sup>16</sup> yive <sup>4</sup>  
 Everemore hwil I live!  
 To-mo[r]we sholen <sup>17</sup> ye <sup>18</sup> ben weddet,  
 And, maugre þin,<sup>19</sup> togidere beddet.'  
 Goldeborw gret,<sup>20</sup> and was hire ille <sup>21</sup>;  
 25 She wolde ben ded, bi hire wille.

On þe morwen, hwan day was sprungen,  
 And daybelle <sup>22</sup> at [þe] kirke <sup>23</sup> rungen,  
 After Havelok sente þat Judas,  
 þat werse was þanne Sathanas,

<sup>1</sup> at her approach

<sup>2</sup> nevertheless

<sup>3</sup> deceitful

<sup>4</sup> MS. yeve

<sup>5</sup> MS. Iohan

<sup>6</sup> MS. to hire

<sup>7</sup> unless

<sup>8</sup> such

<sup>9</sup> MS. hwor

<sup>10</sup> lady

<sup>11</sup> vagabond, low fellow

<sup>12</sup> marry

<sup>13</sup> MS. ne shalt

<sup>14</sup> lord

<sup>15</sup> a curse upon him who

<sup>16</sup> another

<sup>17</sup> shall

<sup>18</sup> MS. ye sholen

<sup>19</sup> in spite of thee

<sup>20</sup> wept

<sup>21</sup> it was ill for her

<sup>22</sup> matin-bell

<sup>23</sup> church

And seyde : ' Mayster, wiltu <sup>1</sup> wif <sup>2</sup> ? '

' Nay,' quoth Havelok, ' bi my lif !

Hwat sholde Ich with wive <sup>3</sup> do ?

I ne may hire fede, ne cloþe, ne sho.

[H]wider sholde Ich wimman <sup>4</sup> bringe ?

I ne have none kin[n]es <sup>5</sup> þinge.

I ne have hus, <sup>6</sup> Y ne have cote,

I ne <sup>7</sup> have stikke, Y ne have sprote, <sup>8</sup>

I ne have neyþer bred ne sowel, <sup>9</sup>

Ne cloth, but of an old whit <sup>10</sup> couel. <sup>11</sup>

Þis <sup>12</sup> cloþes, þat Ich onne have,

Aren þe kokes, and Ich his knave.'

Godrich stirt <sup>13</sup> up, and on him dong <sup>14</sup>

[With dintes <sup>15</sup> swiþe hard and strong], <sup>16</sup>

And seyde : ' But <sup>17</sup> þou hire take

þat Y wole yeven þe to make, <sup>18</sup>

I shal hangen þe ful heye,

Or Y shal þristen <sup>19</sup> ut þin eie. <sup>20</sup> '

Havelok was one, <sup>21</sup> and was adrad, <sup>22</sup>

And grauntede him al þat he bad.

þo <sup>23</sup> sende he after hire sone, <sup>24</sup>

þe fayrest wymman under mone <sup>25</sup> ;

And seyde til hire, [fals] <sup>18</sup> and slike, <sup>26</sup>

þat wicke þral, þat foule swike <sup>27</sup> :

' But þu þis man understonde, <sup>28</sup>

I shal flemen <sup>29</sup> þe of <sup>30</sup> londe ;

· Or þou shal[t] to þe galwes <sup>31</sup> renne, <sup>32</sup>

5

10

15

20

25

<sup>1</sup> wilt thou ; MS. wilte

<sup>2</sup> take a wife

<sup>3</sup> MS. wif

<sup>4</sup> a woman

<sup>5</sup> of no kind

<sup>6</sup> MS. hws

<sup>7</sup> MS. ne i

<sup>8</sup> sprout, twig

<sup>9</sup> relish eaten with bread

<sup>10</sup> MS. hoïd with

<sup>11</sup> garment

<sup>12</sup> these

<sup>13</sup> started

<sup>14</sup> struck

<sup>15</sup> blows

<sup>16</sup> Supplied by Skeat

<sup>17</sup> unless

<sup>18</sup> mate, wife

<sup>19</sup> thrust

<sup>20</sup> MS. heie

<sup>21</sup> alone

<sup>22</sup> MS. odrat

<sup>23</sup> then

<sup>24</sup> soon

<sup>25</sup> the moon

<sup>26</sup> smooth

<sup>27</sup> traitor

<sup>28</sup> receive

<sup>29</sup> banish

<sup>30</sup> from

<sup>31</sup> gallows

<sup>32</sup> run

And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne.<sup>1</sup>  
 Sho<sup>2</sup> was adrad, for he so prette,<sup>8</sup>  
 And durste<sup>4</sup> nouht þe spusing<sup>5</sup> lette<sup>6</sup>;  
 But þey<sup>7</sup> hire likede<sup>8</sup> swiþe ille,  
 5 [Sho] pouhte it was Godes wille:  
 God, þat makes to growen þe korn,  
 Formede hire wimman to be born.

Hwan he havede him don,<sup>9</sup> for drede,  
 þat he sholde hire spusen and fede,  
 10 And þat she sholde til him holde,  
 þer weren penies<sup>10</sup> picke tolde,<sup>11</sup>  
 Mikel plente upon þe bok:  
 He<sup>12</sup> ys<sup>13</sup> hire yaf, and she [e]s<sup>14</sup> tok.  
 He<sup>15</sup> weren spused fayre and wel:  
 15 þe messe he dede,<sup>16</sup> [and] everidel<sup>17</sup>  
 þat fel<sup>18</sup> to spusing, a<sup>19</sup> god cle[r]k,<sup>20</sup>  
 þe Erchebishop ut of<sup>21</sup> Yerk,  
 þat kam to þe parlement,  
 Als God him havede pider sent.

Hwan he<sup>22</sup> togydere in Godes lawe  
 Weren,<sup>28</sup> þat<sup>24</sup> folc<sup>25</sup> ful wel it sawe,  
 He ne wisten<sup>26</sup> hwat he mouhten,<sup>27</sup>  
 Ne he ne wisten [h]wat hem douhte<sup>28</sup> —  
 þer to dwellen, or þenne<sup>29</sup> to gonge.  
 25 þer ne wolden he dwellen longe;  
 For he wisten, and ful wel sawe,  
 Godrich<sup>30</sup> hem hatede, þe devel him awe<sup>31</sup>!  
 And yf he dwelleden þer ouht<sup>32</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> burn<sup>2</sup> she<sup>8</sup> threatened<sup>4</sup> dared<sup>6</sup> marriage<sup>6</sup> hinder<sup>7</sup> though<sup>8</sup> it pleased her<sup>9</sup> caused; MS. don him<sup>10</sup> pennies<sup>11</sup> counted in great number<sup>12</sup> Godrich<sup>13</sup> them<sup>14</sup> them; MS. as<sup>15</sup> they<sup>16</sup> performed; MS. deden<sup>17</sup> everything<sup>18</sup> pertained<sup>19</sup> MS. and<sup>20</sup> clergyman<sup>21</sup> out of, from<sup>22</sup> they<sup>28</sup> Transposed from preceding line (weren togydere)<sup>24</sup> MS. þat þe<sup>25</sup> people<sup>26</sup> knew<sup>27</sup> could do<sup>28</sup> availed them<sup>29</sup> thence<sup>30</sup> MS. þat Godrich<sup>31</sup> own, possess; MS. hawe<sup>32</sup> any space of time



þat fel Havelok ful wel on þouht —

Men sholde don his leman shame,

Or elles bringen in wicke<sup>1</sup> blame;

þat were him levere<sup>2</sup> to ben ded.

Forþi<sup>3</sup> he<sup>4</sup> token anoper red,<sup>5</sup>

5

þat þei sholden þenne fle<sup>6</sup>

Til<sup>7</sup> Grim, and til<sup>7</sup> hise sones þre;

þer wenden<sup>8</sup> he<sup>4</sup> alþerbeste<sup>9</sup> to spede,<sup>10</sup>

Hem<sup>11</sup> for to cloþe, and for to fede.

þe lond he<sup>4</sup> token under fote,<sup>12</sup>

10

Ne wisten he<sup>4</sup> non oper bote,<sup>13</sup>

And helden ay the rihte sti<sup>14</sup>

Til he<sup>4</sup> komen to Grimesby.

þanne<sup>15</sup> he<sup>4</sup> komen þere, þanne was Grim ded,

Of him ne haveden he<sup>4</sup> no red;

15

But hise children alle fyve

Alle weren yet on live<sup>16</sup>;

þat<sup>17</sup> ful fayre ayen<sup>18</sup> hem neme,<sup>19</sup>

Hwan he<sup>4</sup> wisten þat he<sup>4</sup> keme,<sup>20</sup>

And maden joie swiþe mikel;

20

Ne weren he<sup>4</sup> nevere ayen hem fikel.<sup>21</sup>

On knes ful fayre he<sup>4</sup> hem setten,

And Havelok swiþe fayre gretten,<sup>22</sup>

And seyden: 'Welkome, loverd<sup>23</sup> dere,

And welkome be þi fayre fere<sup>24</sup>!

25

Blessed be þat ilke þrawe<sup>25</sup>

þat þou hire toke in Godes lawe!

Wel is us<sup>26</sup> we sen þe on lyve,

þou mihte<sup>27</sup> us boþe selle and yive<sup>28</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> wicked

<sup>2</sup> liefer, rather

<sup>3</sup> therefore

<sup>4</sup> they

<sup>5</sup> counsel, help

<sup>6</sup> flee

<sup>7</sup> to

<sup>8</sup> thought

<sup>9</sup> best of all

<sup>10</sup> prosper

<sup>11</sup> themselves

<sup>12</sup> they walked

<sup>13</sup> remedy

<sup>14</sup> road

<sup>15</sup> when

<sup>16</sup> in life = alive

<sup>17</sup> who

<sup>18</sup> towards

<sup>19</sup> went

<sup>20</sup> were coming

<sup>21</sup> fickle

<sup>22</sup> greeted

<sup>23</sup> lord

<sup>24</sup> companion, wife

<sup>25</sup> time, moment

<sup>26</sup> to us; MS. hus

<sup>27</sup> might

<sup>28</sup> MS. yeve

- þou mayt us boþe yive<sup>1</sup> and selle,  
 With-þat<sup>2</sup> þou wilt here dwelle.  
 We haven, loverd, alle gode,<sup>3</sup>  
 Hors,<sup>4</sup> and net,<sup>5</sup> and ship on flode,<sup>6</sup>  
 5 Gold, and silver, and michel auhte,<sup>7</sup>  
 þat Grim ure fader us bitauhte<sup>8</sup>;  
 Gold, and silver, and oper fe<sup>9</sup>  
 Bad he us bitaken<sup>10</sup> þe.  
 We haven shep, we haven swin,  
 10 Bileve<sup>11</sup> her, loverd, and al be pin !  
 . þo[u] shalt ben loverd, þou shalt ben syre,<sup>12</sup>  
 And we sholen serven þe and hire ;  
 And ure<sup>13</sup> sistres sholen do  
 Al that evere biddes sho<sup>14</sup> ;  
 15 He<sup>15</sup> sholen hire cloþes<sup>16</sup> washen and wringen,  
 And to<sup>17</sup> hondes water bringen ;  
 He<sup>15</sup> sholen bedden<sup>18</sup> hire and þe,  
 For levedi wile we þat she be.  
 Hwan he<sup>15</sup> þis joie haveden made,  
 20 Sithen<sup>19</sup> stikes broken and kraked,  
 And þe fir brouht on brenne,<sup>20</sup>  
 Ne was þer spared gos<sup>21</sup> ne henne,  
 Ne þe ende,<sup>22</sup> ne þe drake,  
 Mete he<sup>15</sup> deden plente make ;<sup>23</sup>  
 25 Ne wantede þere no god mete ;  
 Wyn and ale deden he<sup>15</sup> fete,<sup>24</sup>  
 And maden<sup>25</sup> hem glade and bliþe,  
 Wesseyl ledden<sup>26</sup> he fele siþe.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. yeve<sup>2</sup> provided that<sup>3</sup> property, goods<sup>4</sup> horses<sup>5</sup> cattle<sup>6</sup> sea<sup>7</sup> possessions ; MS. auchte<sup>8</sup> delivered, committed ; MS. bitawchte<sup>9</sup> property<sup>10</sup> deliver, commit<sup>11</sup> remain<sup>12</sup> seignior, master<sup>13</sup> our ; MS. hure<sup>14</sup> she<sup>15</sup> they<sup>16</sup> MS. cloþen<sup>17</sup> for<sup>18</sup> put to bed<sup>19</sup> afterwards<sup>20</sup> to burning<sup>21</sup> goose<sup>22</sup> duck ; MS. hende<sup>23</sup> they had plenty of meats  
prepared<sup>24</sup> they caused to be brought<sup>25</sup> MS. made<sup>26</sup> they led wassails (drank  
healths)<sup>27</sup> many times

On þe niht, as Goldeborw lay,  
 Sory and sorwful was she ay,  
 For she wende she were biswike,<sup>1</sup>  
 Þat she were <sup>2</sup> yeven <sup>3</sup> unkyndelike.<sup>4</sup>  
 O niht <sup>5</sup> saw she þerinne a liht,<sup>6</sup> 5  
 A swiþe fayr, a swiþe bryht,  
 Al so briht, al so shir<sup>7</sup>  
 So<sup>8</sup> it were a blase<sup>9</sup> of fir.  
 She lokede no[r]þ, and ek south,  
 And saw it comen ut of his mouth, 10  
 Þat lay bi hire in þe bed —  
 No ferlike<sup>10</sup> þou[h] she were adred !  
 Þouhte she : ‘ [H]wat may this bimene<sup>11</sup> ?  
 He beth<sup>12</sup> heyman<sup>13</sup> yet, als Y wene<sup>14</sup> ;  
 He beth heyman er he be<sup>15</sup> ded.’ 15  
 On hise shuldre, of gold red  
 She saw a swiþe noble croiz,<sup>16</sup>  
 Of an angel she herde a voyz<sup>17</sup> :  
 ‘ Goldeborw, lat þi sorwe be,<sup>17</sup>  
 For Havelok, þat haveþ spuset þe, 20  
 Is<sup>18</sup> kinges sone and kinges eyr<sup>19</sup> ;  
 Þat bikenneth<sup>20</sup> þat croiz so fayr.  
 It bikenneth more — þat he shal  
 Denemark haven, and Englonde al ;  
 He shal ben king, strong and stark, 25  
 Of Engeland and Denemark ;  
 Þat shal[t] þu wit[h] þin eyne sen,  
 And þo[u] shalt quen and levedi ben.’  
 Þanne<sup>21</sup> she haveþe herd the stevene<sup>22</sup>  
 Of þe angel ut of hevene, 30

<sup>1</sup> cheated, deceived<sup>2</sup> MS. shere (*for* she were)<sup>3</sup> given<sup>4</sup> beneath her rank<sup>5</sup> in the night<sup>6</sup> light<sup>7</sup> shining<sup>8</sup> as if<sup>9</sup> blaze<sup>10</sup> wonder<sup>11</sup> mean<sup>12</sup> is<sup>13</sup> nobleman<sup>14</sup> think<sup>15</sup> cross<sup>16</sup> voice<sup>17</sup> put aside thy sorrow<sup>18</sup> MS. he<sup>19</sup> heir<sup>20</sup> betokens<sup>21</sup> when<sup>22</sup> voice

She was so fele sipes<sup>1</sup> blithe  
 þat she ne mihte hire ioie mythe<sup>2</sup> —  
 But Havelok sone anon she kiste;  
 And he slep, and nouht ne wiste<sup>3</sup>  
 5       Hwat þat aungel havede seyð.

### GOWER, CONFESSIO AMANTIS

John Gower — 'moral Gower,' as Chaucer called him — was born about 1330, and died between August 15 and October 24, 1408. He was of a Kentish family, a layman, and a man of some wealth. For the most part, he probably resided in London, and was personally known to Richard II. While living in Southwark, he married one Agnes Groundolf on January 25, 1397/8, and perhaps had been married before. He lies buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, formerly called St. Mary Overey. The effigy of the poet, beneath a three-arched canopy, exhibits his head resting upon three volumes, bearing the names of his three principal works — *Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*.

Of these the first, now known as the *Mirour de l'Omme* (*Speculum Hominis*) has only recently been discovered. This is in French, the *Vox Clamantis* in Latin, and the *Confessio Amantis* in English. The French work was the earliest, the Latin work was produced about 1382, while the English work assumed its final form in 1393. The *Confessio Amantis* contains more than 33,000 lines, surpassing the *Mirour de l'Omme* by above 4000 lines. Besides these three, Gower wrote several minor works. The whole has been critically edited in four volumes by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1899-1902). In the French and the Latin poems, Gower's tendency is markedly didactic. In the English poem his general theme is love, which he illustrates by a series of 112 stories.

Lowell said, in his essay on Chaucer: 'Gower has positively raised tediousness to the precision of a science.' A fairer judgment is that by Ker (*English Literature, Mediæval*, pp. 225-226): 'Gower should always be remembered along with Chaucer; he is what Chaucer might have been without genius and without his Italian reading, but with his critical tact, and much of his skill in verse and diction. The *Confessio Amantis* is monotonous, but it is not dull. Much of it at a time is wearisome, but as it is composed of a number of separate stories, it can be read in bits, and ought to be so read. Taken one at a time, the clear bright little passages come out with a meaning and a charm that may be lost when the book is read too perseveringly.'

The *Apollonius of Tyre*, the first of our extracts, was first written in Greek (probably third century), and afterwards translated into Latin. Gower paraphrased the Latin, and the Shakespearean (?) *Pericles* is, in turn, based upon

<sup>1</sup> so many times, so very

<sup>2</sup> conceal

<sup>3</sup> knew

Gower. For further particulars concerning Apollonius, see my *First Book in Old English*, pp. 164-165.

The Æson story is derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (7. 162-293), 132 lines of the original being expanded to 230. A portion of this Ovidian passage (*Met.* 7. 197 ff.), extremely condensed by Gower, reappears in Shakespeare's *Tempest* 5. 1. 33-50.

## APOLLONIUS OF TYRE

8. 597-911

Of Tharsiens<sup>1</sup> his leve anon  
 He<sup>2</sup> tok, and is to schipe gon.  
 His cours he nam<sup>3</sup> with seil updrawe,<sup>4</sup>  
 Where as<sup>5</sup> Fortune doth<sup>6</sup> the lawe,  
 And scheweth, as I schal reherse, 5  
 How sche<sup>7</sup> was to this lord diverse,<sup>8</sup>  
 The which<sup>9</sup> upon the see sche ferketh.<sup>10</sup>  
 The wynd aros, the weder derketh,<sup>11</sup>  
 It blew and made such tempeste  
 Non anchor mai the schip areste, 10  
 Which hath tobroken al his gere<sup>12</sup>;  
 The schipmen stode in such a feere,  
 Was non that myhte himself bestere,<sup>13</sup>  
 Bot evere awaite upon the lere,<sup>14</sup>  
 Whan that thei scholde drenche<sup>15</sup> at ones. 15  
 Ther was ynowh withinne wones<sup>16</sup>  
 Of wepinge and of sorghe<sup>17</sup> tho<sup>18</sup>;  
 This yonge king makth mochel wo  
 So for to se the schip travaile<sup>19</sup>;  
 Bot al that myhte him nocht availe; 20  
 The mast tobrak,<sup>20</sup> the seil torof<sup>21</sup>;  
 The schip upon the wawes drof,

<sup>1</sup> the people of Tarsus<sup>2</sup> Apollonius<sup>3</sup> took<sup>4</sup> drawn up<sup>5</sup> wherever<sup>6</sup> makes, lays down<sup>7</sup> Fortune<sup>8</sup> contrary<sup>9</sup> Apollonius<sup>10</sup> conducts<sup>11</sup> grows dark<sup>12</sup> tackle<sup>13</sup> bestir<sup>14</sup> destruction, shipwreck (OE. *lyre*)<sup>15</sup> drown<sup>16</sup> reach<sup>17</sup> sorrow<sup>18</sup> then<sup>19</sup> labor<sup>20</sup> snapped<sup>21</sup> was rent

Til that thei sihe <sup>1</sup> a londes cooste.  
 Tho made avou <sup>2</sup> the leste and moste,  
 Be so <sup>3</sup> thei myhten come alonde <sup>4</sup>;  
 Bot he which hath the see on honde,  
 5 Neptunus, wolde noght acorde,  
 Bot altobroke <sup>5</sup> cable and corde;  
 Er thei to londe myhte aproche,  
 The schip toclef <sup>6</sup> upon a roche,  
 And al goth down into the depe.  
 10 Bot He that alle thing mai kepe  
 Unto this lord was merciable,  
 And broghte him sauþ upon a table,<sup>7</sup>  
 Which to the lond him hath upbore;  
 The remenant was al forlore,<sup>8</sup>  
 15 Whereof he made mochel mone.<sup>9</sup>  
 Thus was this yonge lord him one,<sup>10</sup>  
 Al naked in a povere plit <sup>11</sup>;  
 His colour, which whilom <sup>12</sup> was whyt,  
 Was thanne of <sup>13</sup> water fade <sup>14</sup> and pale,  
 20 And ek he was so sore <sup>15</sup> acale <sup>16</sup>  
 That he wiste <sup>17</sup> of himself no bote <sup>18</sup>:  
 It halp <sup>19</sup> him nothing for to mote <sup>20</sup>  
 To gete ayein that he hath lore.<sup>21</sup>  
 Bot sche which hath his deth forbore,<sup>22</sup>  
 25 Fortune, thogh sche wol noght yelpe,<sup>23</sup>  
 Al sodeinly hath sent him helpe,  
 Whanne him thoghte alle grace aweie:  
 Ther cam a fisshere in the weie,  
 And sih <sup>24</sup> a man ther naked stonde;  
 30 And whan that he hath understonde

<sup>1</sup> saw  
<sup>2</sup> promise  
<sup>3</sup> on condition that  
<sup>4</sup> to land  
<sup>5</sup> broke asunder  
<sup>6</sup> clove asunder, split  
<sup>7</sup> plank  
<sup>8</sup> lost

<sup>9</sup> moan  
<sup>10</sup> alone  
<sup>11</sup> plight  
<sup>12</sup> aforetime  
<sup>13</sup> by reason of  
<sup>14</sup> pale  
<sup>15</sup> very  
<sup>16</sup> acold, cold

<sup>17</sup> knew  
<sup>18</sup> remedy  
<sup>19</sup> helped  
<sup>20</sup> wish (unique in this sense)  
<sup>21</sup> lost  
<sup>22</sup> withheld  
<sup>23</sup> boast  
<sup>24</sup> saw

The cause, he hath of him gret routhe,<sup>1</sup>  
 And, onliche <sup>2</sup> of his povere trouthe,<sup>8</sup>  
 Of suche clothes as he hadde  
 With gret pite this lord he cladde.  
 And he him thonketh as he scholde, 5  
 And seith him that it schal be yolde,<sup>4</sup>  
 If evere he gete his stat <sup>5</sup> ayein,  
 And preide that he wolde him sein <sup>6</sup>  
 If nyh were eny toun for him.  
 He seide : ' Yee,<sup>7</sup> Pentapolim, 10  
 Wher bothe king and queene duellen.'  
 Whanne he this tale herde tellen,  
 He gladeth him,<sup>8</sup> and gan beseche  
 That he the weie him wolde teche <sup>9</sup> ;  
 And he him taghte ; and forth he wente, 15  
 And preide God with good entente <sup>10</sup>  
 To sende him joie after his sorwe.  
 It was noght passed yit mid-morwe,<sup>11</sup>  
 Whan thiderward his weie he nam,<sup>12</sup>  
 Wher sone <sup>13</sup> upon the non <sup>14</sup> he cam. 20  
 He eet such as he myhte gete,  
 And forth anon, whan he hadde ete,  
 He goth to se the toun aboute,  
 And cam ther as <sup>15</sup> he fond a route  
 Of yonge lusti men withalle ; 25  
 And as it scholde tho befallē,  
 That day was set of such assise <sup>16</sup>  
 That thei scholde, in the londes guise,<sup>17</sup>  
 As he herde of the poeple seie,  
 Here <sup>18</sup> comun game thanne pleie ; 30  
 And crid <sup>19</sup> was that thei scholden come

<sup>1</sup> ruth, pity<sup>2</sup> only<sup>3</sup> loyalty<sup>4</sup> repaid<sup>5</sup> state, dignity<sup>6</sup> say<sup>7</sup> yea<sup>8</sup> himself<sup>9</sup> point out, show<sup>10</sup> intent<sup>11</sup> mid-morning<sup>12</sup> took<sup>13</sup> soon<sup>14</sup> noon<sup>15</sup> where<sup>16</sup> manner ; MS. assisse<sup>17</sup> fashion<sup>18</sup> their<sup>19</sup> cried

Unto the gamen<sup>1</sup> alle and some<sup>2</sup>  
 Of hem that ben delivere<sup>3</sup> and wyhte,<sup>4</sup>  
 To do such maistrie<sup>5</sup> as thei myhte.  
 Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,  
 5 For so that ilke<sup>6</sup> game wolde,<sup>7</sup>  
 As it was tho custume and us<sup>8</sup>;  
 Amonges hem was no refus.<sup>9</sup>  
 The flour of al the toun was there,  
 And of the court also ther were;  
 10 And that was in a large place  
 Riht evene<sup>10</sup> afore the kinges face,  
 Which Arcestrates<sup>11</sup> thanne hihte.<sup>12</sup>  
 The pley was pleid riht in his sihte,  
 And who most worthi was of dede  
 15 Receive he scholde a certain mede,<sup>13</sup>  
 And in the cite bere a pris.<sup>14</sup>  
 Appolinus, which, war<sup>15</sup> and wys,  
 Of every game couthe<sup>16</sup> an ende,<sup>17</sup>  
 He thoghte assaie,<sup>18</sup> hou so it wende,<sup>19</sup>  
 20 And fell among hem into game;  
 And there he wan him such a name,  
 So as the king himself acompteth,<sup>20</sup>  
 That he alle othre men surmonteth,  
 And bar the pris above hem alle.  
 25 The king bad that into his halle  
 At souper-time he schal be broght;  
 And he cam thanne, and lefte<sup>21</sup> it noght,  
 Withoute compaignie, alone.  
 Was non so semlich<sup>22</sup> of persone,  
 30 Of visage and of limes<sup>23</sup> bothe,

1 games  
 2 one and all  
 3 active  
 4 nimble  
 5 feat  
 6 same  
 7 required  
 8 use

9 refusal  
 10 directly  
 11 Arcestrates  
 12 was called  
 13 reward  
 14 prize  
 15 wary  
 16 knew

17 an ende = pretty thoroughly  
 18 to try  
 19 might turn out  
 20 deems  
 21 neglected  
 22 seemly  
 23 limbs



If that he hadde what to clothe <sup>1</sup> ;  
 At souper-time, natheles,  
 The king amiddes al the pres <sup>2</sup>  
 Let <sup>3</sup> clepe <sup>4</sup> him up among hem alle,  
 And bad his mareschall <sup>5</sup> of halle 5  
 To setten him in such degre <sup>6</sup>  
 That he upon him myhte se.  
 The king was sone set and served,  
 And he, which hath his pris deserved  
 After the kinges oghne <sup>7</sup> word, 10  
 Was mad beginne <sup>8</sup> a middel bord, <sup>9</sup>  
 That bothe king and queene him sihe. <sup>10</sup>  
 He sat and caste aboute his yhe,  
 And sih the lordes in astat, <sup>11</sup>  
 And with himself wax <sup>12</sup> in debat, 15  
 Thenkende <sup>13</sup> what he hadde lore <sup>14</sup> ;  
 And such a sorwe he tok therfore,  
 That he sat evere stille and thoghte,  
 As he which of no mete <sup>15</sup> roghte. <sup>16</sup>  
 The king behield his hevynesse, <sup>17</sup> 20  
 And, of his grete gentillesse,  
 His doghter, which was fair and good,  
 And ate <sup>18</sup> bord before him stod,  
 As it was thilke <sup>19</sup> time usage, <sup>20</sup>  
 He bad to gon on his message, 25  
 And fonde <sup>21</sup> for to make him glad.  
 And sche dede as hire fader bad,  
 And goth to him the softe pas, <sup>22</sup>  
 And axeth whenne <sup>23</sup> and what he was,  
 And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve. <sup>24</sup> 30

<sup>1</sup> wear  
<sup>2</sup> press, crowd

<sup>3</sup> bade

<sup>4</sup> to call

<sup>5</sup> marshal

<sup>6</sup> station

<sup>7</sup> own

<sup>8</sup> to begin, sit at the head of

<sup>9</sup> table

<sup>10</sup> might see

<sup>11</sup> state

<sup>12</sup> grew

<sup>13</sup> thinking

<sup>14</sup> lost

<sup>15</sup> food

<sup>16</sup> took account, recked

<sup>17</sup> sadness

<sup>18</sup> at the

<sup>19</sup> that

<sup>20</sup> custom

<sup>21</sup> attempt

<sup>22</sup> pace

<sup>23</sup> whence

<sup>24</sup> abandon

He seith : ' Madame, be<sup>1</sup> your leve,

Mi name is hote<sup>2</sup> Appolinus ;

And of mi richesse it is thus —

Upon the see I have it lore.

5 The contre wher as I was bore,

Wher that my lond is and mi rente,<sup>3</sup>

I lefte at Tyr, whan that I wente ;

The worschipe<sup>4</sup> of this worldes aghte,<sup>5</sup>

Unto the god ther I betaghte.<sup>6</sup>

10 And thus togedre as thei tuo speeke,

The teres runne be<sup>7</sup> his cheeke.

The king, which therof tok good kepe,<sup>8</sup>

Hath gret pite to sen him wepe,

And for his doghter sende ayein,

15 And preide hir faire, and gan to sein<sup>9</sup>

That sche no lengere wolde drecche,<sup>10</sup>

Bot that sche wolde anon forth fecche

Hire harpe, and don al that sche can

To glade with<sup>11</sup> that sory man.

20 And sche, to don hir fader<sup>12</sup> heste,<sup>13</sup>

Hir harpe fette,<sup>14</sup> and, in the feste,<sup>15</sup>

Upon a chaier which thei fette

Hirself next to this man sche sette ;

With harpe bothe, and ek with mouthe,

25 To him sche dede al that sche couthe

To make him chiere<sup>16</sup> — and evere he siketh<sup>17</sup> ;

And sche him axeth hou him liketh.<sup>18</sup>

' Madame, certes<sup>19</sup> wel,' he seide,

' Bot, if ye the mesure pleide

30 Which, if you list, I schal you liere,<sup>20</sup>

It were a glad thing for to hiere.'

<sup>1</sup> by

<sup>2</sup> called

<sup>3</sup> income

<sup>4</sup> honor

<sup>5</sup> goods

<sup>6</sup> committed

<sup>7</sup> along, down

<sup>8</sup> heed

<sup>9</sup> say

<sup>10</sup> delay

<sup>11</sup> with which to gladden

<sup>12</sup> father's

<sup>13</sup> command

<sup>14</sup> fetched

<sup>15</sup> feast

<sup>16</sup> entertainment

<sup>17</sup> sighs

<sup>18</sup> it pleases him

<sup>19</sup> certainly

<sup>20</sup> teach

' Ha, lieve sire,<sup>1</sup> ' tho<sup>2</sup> quod sche,  
 ' Now tak the harpe, and let me se  
 Of what mesure that ye mene.'  
 Tho preith the king, tho preith the queene,  
 Forth with<sup>3</sup> the lordes alle arewe,<sup>4</sup>  
 That he som merthe wolde schewe ;  
 He takth the harpe, and in his wise  
 He tempreth,<sup>5</sup> and of such assise<sup>6</sup>  
 Singende he harpeth forth withal,  
 That as a vois celestial  
 Hem thoghte<sup>7</sup> it souneth in here ere,  
 As thogh that he an angel were.  
 Thei gladen of his melodie ;  
 Bot, most of all the compainie,  
 The kinges doghter, which it herde,  
 And thoghte ek<sup>8</sup> hou that he ansuerde,  
 Whan that he was of<sup>9</sup> hire opposed,<sup>10</sup>  
 Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed  
 That he is of gret gentillesse.  
 Hise dedes ben therof witenesse,  
 Forth with the wisdom of his lore ;  
 It nedeth noght to seche<sup>11</sup> more —  
 He myhte noght have such manere,  
 Of gentil blod bot-if<sup>12</sup> he were.  
 Whanne he hath harped al his fille,  
 The kinges heste to fulfille,  
 Away goth dissh, away goth cuppe,  
 Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,  
 Thei risen and gon out of halle.  
 The king his chamberlein let calle,  
 And bad that he be alle weie<sup>13</sup>  
 A chambre for this man pourveie,<sup>14</sup>

5

10

15

20

25

30

<sup>1</sup> dear sir<sup>2</sup> then<sup>3</sup> together with<sup>4</sup> successively (in a row)<sup>5</sup> tunes<sup>6</sup> in such manner<sup>7</sup> it seemed to them<sup>8</sup> eke, also<sup>9</sup> by<sup>10</sup> questioned<sup>11</sup> seek<sup>12</sup> unless<sup>13</sup> without fail<sup>14</sup> purvey, provide

Which nyh his oghne chambre be.<sup>1</sup>  
 'It schal be do,<sup>2</sup> mi lord,' quod he.  
 Appolinus, of whom I mene,<sup>3</sup>  
 Tho tok his leve of king and queene,  
 5 And of the worthi maide also,  
 Which preide unto hir fader tho  
 That sche myhte of that yonge man  
 Of tho <sup>4</sup> sciences whiche he can <sup>5</sup>  
 His lore <sup>6</sup> have; and in this wise  
 10 The king hir granteth his aprise,<sup>7</sup>  
 So that himself therto assente.  
 Thus was acorded, er thei wente,  
 That he, with al that evere he may,  
 This yonge faire freisshe may <sup>8</sup>  
 15 Of that he couthe scholde enforme;  
 And, full assented in this forme,  
 Thei token leve as for that nyht.  
 And, whanne it was amorwe <sup>9</sup> lyht,  
 Unto this yonge man of Tyr  
 20 Of clothes and of good atir,  
 With gold and selver to despende,<sup>10</sup>  
 This worthi yonge lady sende;  
 And thus sche made him wel at ese;  
 And he, with al that he can plese,  
 25 Hire serveth wel and faire <sup>11</sup> ayein.  
 He tawhte hir til sche was certein  
 Of harpe, of citole,<sup>12</sup> and of rote,<sup>13</sup>  
 With many a tun <sup>14</sup> and many a note  
 Upon musique, upon mesure;  
 30 And of hire harpe the temprure <sup>15</sup>  
 He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.

<sup>1</sup> should be<sup>2</sup> done<sup>3</sup> make mention<sup>4</sup> those<sup>5</sup> knows<sup>6</sup> teaching<sup>7</sup> instruction<sup>8</sup> damsel<sup>9</sup> in the morning<sup>10</sup> spend<sup>11</sup> fairly<sup>12</sup> dulcimer<sup>13</sup> violin<sup>14</sup> tune<sup>15</sup> tuning

Bot, as men sein that frele<sup>1</sup> is youthe,  
 With leisir<sup>2</sup> and continuance  
 This mayde fell upon a chance,  
 That Love hath mad him<sup>3</sup> a querele<sup>4</sup>  
 Ayein hire youthe freissh and frele, 5  
 That malgre<sup>5</sup> wher<sup>6</sup> sche wole<sup>7</sup> or noght,  
 Sche mot<sup>8</sup> with al hire hertes thoght  
 To Love and to his lawe obeie;  
 And that sche schal ful sore abeie,<sup>9</sup>  
 For sche wot<sup>10</sup> nevere what it is, 10  
 Bot evere among<sup>11</sup> sche fieleth<sup>12</sup> this.  
 Thenkende upon this man of Tyr,  
 Hire herte is hot as eny fyr,  
 And otherwhile it is acale;  
 Now is sche red, nou is sche pale, 15  
 Riht after the condicion  
 Of hire ymaginacion;  
 Bot evere among hire thoghtes alle,  
 Sche thoghte, what so mai befallle,  
 Or<sup>13</sup> that sche lawhe,<sup>14</sup> or that sche wepe, 20  
 Sche wolde hire goode name kepe,  
 For feere of wommanysshe<sup>15</sup> schame.  
 Bot, what in ernest and in game,  
 Sche stant<sup>16</sup> for love in such a plit<sup>17</sup>  
 That sche hath lost al appetit 25  
 Of mete, of drinke, of nyhtes reste,  
 As sche that not<sup>18</sup> what is the beste.  
 Bot, for to thenken al hir fille,  
 Sche hield<sup>19</sup> hire ofte times stille  
 Withinne hir chambre, and goth noght oute; 30

1 frail  
 2 leisure  
 3 for himself  
 4 attack  
 5 in spite of  
 6 whether  
 7 will

8 must  
 9 atone for  
 10 knows  
 11 in the course (of things)  
 12 feels  
 13 whether  
 14 laugh

15 womanly  
 16 stands  
 17 plight  
 18 knows not  
 19 held

The king was of hire lif in doute,  
Which wiste nothing what it mente.

Bot fell a time, as he out wente  
To walke, of princes sones thre  
5 Ther come and felle to his kne ;  
And ech of hem in sondri wise  
Besoghte and profreth his servise,  
So that he myhte his doghter have.  
The king, which wolde his honour save,  
10 Seith sche is siek,<sup>1</sup> and of that speche  
Tho <sup>2</sup> was no time to beseche ;  
Bot ech of hem do make <sup>3</sup> a bille <sup>4</sup>  
He bad, and wryte his oghne wille,  
His name, his fader, and his good <sup>5</sup> ;  
15 And whan sche wiste hou that it stod,  
And hadde here <sup>6</sup> billes oversein,<sup>7</sup>  
Thei scholden have ansuere ayein.  
Of this conseil thei weren glad,  
And writen as the king hem bad ;  
20 And every man his oghne bok  
Into the kinges hond betok,<sup>8</sup>  
And he it to his dowhter sende,  
And preide hir for to make an ende  
And wryte ayein hire oghne hond,  
25 Riht <sup>9</sup> as sche in hire herte fond.

The billes weren wel received ;  
Bot sche hath alle here loves weyved,<sup>10</sup>  
And thoghte tho was time and space  
To put hire in hir fader <sup>11</sup> grace,  
30 And wrot ayein, and thus sche saide :  
'The schame which is in a maide  
With speche dar noght ben unloke,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sick<sup>2</sup> then<sup>3</sup> cause to make, have made<sup>4</sup> memorandum<sup>5</sup> property<sup>6</sup> their<sup>7</sup> looked over<sup>8</sup> delivered<sup>9</sup> just<sup>10</sup> put aside, rejected<sup>11</sup> father's<sup>12</sup> unlocked

Bot in writinge it mai be spoke;  
 So wryte I to you, fader, thus:  
 Bot-if I have Appolinus,  
 Of al this world, what so betyde,  
 I wol non other man abide; 5  
 And certes if I of him faile,  
 I wot riht wel, withoute faile,  
 Ye schull for me be dowhterles.  
 This lettre cam, and ther was press  
 Tofore <sup>1</sup> the king, ther as <sup>2</sup> he stod; 10  
 And whan that he it understod,  
 He yaf <sup>3</sup> hem ansuer by and by <sup>4</sup>;  
 Bot that was do <sup>5</sup> so prively  
 That non of othres conseil wiste.  
 Thei toke her leve, and wher hem liste <sup>6</sup> 15  
 Thei wente forth upon here weie.

## ÆSON'S RESTORATION TO YOUTH

5-3945-4174

Jason, which sih his fader old,  
 Upon Medea made him <sup>7</sup> bold  
 Of art magique, which sche couthe, <sup>8</sup>  
 And preith hire that his fader <sup>9</sup> youthe 20  
 Sche wolde make ayeinward <sup>10</sup> newe;  
 And sche, that was toward him trewe,  
 Behihte <sup>11</sup> him that sche wolde it do,  
 Whan that sche time sawh therto.  
 Bot what sche dede in that matiere <sup>12</sup> 25  
 It is a wonder thing to hiere;  
 Bot yit, for the novellerie, <sup>13</sup>  
 I thanke tellen a partie. <sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> before  
<sup>2</sup> where  
<sup>3</sup> gave  
<sup>4</sup> directly  
<sup>5</sup> done

<sup>6</sup> it was pleasing to them  
<sup>7</sup> himself  
<sup>8</sup> knew  
<sup>9</sup> father's  
<sup>10</sup> again

<sup>11</sup> promised  
<sup>12</sup> matter  
<sup>13</sup> novelty  
<sup>14</sup> part

Thus it befell upon a nyht,  
 Whan ther was noght bot sterreliht,  
 Sche was varyssht riht as hir liste,<sup>1</sup>  
 That no wyht bot hirself it wiste,  
 5 And that was ate<sup>2</sup> mydneyht-tyde.  
 The world was stille on every side;  
 With open hed and fot al bare,  
 Hir her<sup>3</sup> tosprad,<sup>4</sup> sche gan to fare;  
 Upon hir clothes gert<sup>5</sup> sche was.  
 10 Al specheles,<sup>6</sup> and on the gras,  
 Sche glod<sup>7</sup> forth as an addre doth —  
 Non otherwise sche ne goth —  
 Til sche cam to the freisshe flod;  
 And there a while sche with<sup>8</sup> stod.  
 15 Thries sche torned hire aboute,  
 And thries ek sche gan doun loute,  
 And in the flod sche wette hir her;  
 And thries on the water ther  
 Sche gaspeth with a drecching<sup>9</sup> onde,<sup>10</sup>  
 20 And tho sche tok hir speche on honde.  
 Ferst sche began to clepe<sup>11</sup> and calle  
 Upward unto the sterres alle;  
 To wynd, to air, to see, to lond,  
 Sche preide, and ek hield up hir hond  
 25 To Echates<sup>12</sup> — and gan to crie —  
 Whiche is goddessse of sorcerie.  
 Sche seide: ' Helpeth<sup>13</sup> at this nede,  
 And, as ye maden me to spede<sup>14</sup>  
 Whan Jason cam the flees to seche,  
 30 So help me nou, I you beseche.'  
 With that sche loketh, and was war  
 Doun fro the sky ther cam a char,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> pleased<sup>2</sup> at the<sup>3</sup> hair<sup>4</sup> spread abroad (Lat. *nudos humeris infusa capillos*)<sup>5</sup> girt (Lat. *vestes induta recinctas*)<sup>6</sup> Lat. *per muta silentia noctis*<sup>7</sup> glided<sup>8</sup> by, near<sup>9</sup> troubled, agonizing<sup>10</sup> breath<sup>11</sup> cry<sup>12</sup> Hecate<sup>13</sup> help<sup>14</sup> succeed<sup>15</sup> chariot



The which dragouns aboute drowe <sup>1</sup>;  
 And tho sche gan hir hed doun bowe,  
 And up sche styh, <sup>2</sup> and faire and wel  
 Sche drof <sup>3</sup> forth bothe char and whel <sup>4</sup>  
 Above in th' air among the skyes. 5  
 The lond of Crete and tho <sup>5</sup> parties <sup>6</sup>  
 Sche soughte, and faste gan hire hye, <sup>7</sup>  
 And there, upon the hulles <sup>8</sup> hyhe  
 Of Othrin and Olimpe also,  
 And ek of othre hulles mo, <sup>9</sup> 10  
 Sche fond <sup>10</sup> and gadreth herbes suote <sup>11</sup>;  
 Sche pulleth up som be the rote,  
 And manye with a knyf sche scherth, <sup>12</sup>  
 And alle into hir char sche berth.  
 Thus whan sche hath the hulles sought, 15  
 The flodes ther foryat sche nought <sup>13</sup> —  
 Eridian and Amphisros,  
 Peneie and ek Spercheidos;  
 To hem sche wente, and ther sche nom <sup>14</sup>  
 Bothe of the water and the fom, 20  
 The sond, and ek the smale stones —  
 Whiche as sche ches <sup>15</sup> out for the nones <sup>16</sup>;  
 And of the Rede See a part  
 That was behovelich <sup>17</sup> to hire art

1 drew  
 2 ascended  
 3 drove  
 4 wheel  
 5 those  
 6 parts

7 hie, hasten  
 8 hills  
 9 more  
 10 found  
 11 sweet  
 12 shears

13 not  
 14 took  
 15 chose  
 16 nonce  
 17 needful

6. Crete: this reposes upon a corrupt reading of the Latin; read perhaps 'Thrace.'

9. Othrin: Othrys; Medea flies in a circuit about Thessaly.

17. Eridian: not the Eridanus (Po), but the Apidanus, one of the tributaries of the Peneus, which flows through the vale of Tempe. — Amphisros: a small river flowing northeast into the modern Gulf of Volos.

18. Spercheidos: the Spercheius is south of the preceding.

23. Rede See: Macaulay suggests that Gower read 'rubrum' for the 'refluum' of Ovid's line 267.

Sche tok ; and, after that, aboute  
 Sche soughte sondri sedes oute  
 In felde, and in many greves<sup>1</sup> ;  
 And ek a part sche tok of leves ;  
 5 Bot thing which mihte hire most availe  
 Sche fond in Crete<sup>2</sup> and in Thessaile.

In daies and in nyhtes nyne,  
 With gret travaile and with gret pyne<sup>3</sup>  
 Sche was pourveid<sup>4</sup> of every piece,  
 10 And torneth homward into Grece.

Before the gates of Eson  
 Hir char sche let awai to gon,  
 And tok out ferst that was therinne ;  
 For tho sche thoghte to beginne  
 15 Such thing as semeth impossible,  
 And made hirselves invisible,  
 As sche that was with air enclosed,  
 And mihte of no man be desclosed.

Sche tok up turves of the lond,  
 20 Withoute helpe of mannes hond,  
 Al heled<sup>5</sup> with the grene gras,  
 Of which an alter mad ther was  
 Unto Echates the goddesse  
 Of art magique and the maistresse,  
 And eft another to Juvente,<sup>6</sup>

As sche which dede hir hole<sup>7</sup> entente.  
 Tho tok sche fieldwode<sup>8</sup> and verveyne —  
 Of herbes ben noght betre tueine —  
 Of which anon, withoute let,<sup>9</sup>

30 These alters ben aboute set.

Tuo sondri puttes<sup>10</sup> faste<sup>11</sup> by  
 Sche made, and with that hastely

<sup>1</sup> groves

<sup>2</sup> See note on l. 6, p. 47

<sup>3</sup> MS. peyne

<sup>4</sup> provided

<sup>5</sup> covered

<sup>6</sup> Youth (Hebe)

<sup>7</sup> whole

<sup>8</sup> woodland-growth ; Lat.  
*silva agresti*, literally  
 translated

<sup>9</sup> hindrance ; we still say with-  
 out let or hindrance

<sup>10</sup> pits

<sup>11</sup> near

Raypby  
 25

A wether which was blak sche slouh,<sup>1</sup>  
 And out therof the blod sche drouh,  
 And dede into the pettes<sup>2</sup> tuo ;  
 Warm melk sche putte also therto,  
 With hony meynd<sup>3</sup> ; and in such wise 5  
 Sche gan to make hir sacrifice,  
 And cride and preide forth withal  
 To Pluto the god infernal,  
 And to the queene Proserpine.  
 And so sche soghte out al the line 10  
 Of hem that longen<sup>4</sup> to that craft —  
 Behinde was no name laft —  
 And preide hem<sup>5</sup> alle, as sche wel couthe,  
 To grante Eson his ferste youthe.  
 This olde Eson broght forth was tho ; 15  
 Awei sche bad alle othre<sup>6</sup> go  
 Upon peril that mihte falle ;  
 And with that word thei wenten alle,  
 And leften there hem tuo alone.  
 And tho sche gan to gaspe and gone,<sup>7</sup> 20  
 And made signes many on,  
 And seide hir wordes therupon ;  
 So that, with spellinge of hir charmes,  
 Sche tok Eson in bothe hire armes,  
 And made him for to slepe faste, 25  
 And him upon hire herbes caste.  
 The blake wether tho sche tok,  
 And hiewh<sup>8</sup> the fleisshe, as doth a cok ;  
 On either alter part sche leide,  
 And, with the charmes that sche seide, 30  
 A fyr doun fro the sky alyhte,  
 And made it for to brenne lyhte.

<sup>1</sup> slew  
<sup>2</sup> pits

<sup>3</sup> mingled  
<sup>4</sup> belong

<sup>5</sup> them  
<sup>6</sup> others

<sup>7</sup> gape  
<sup>8</sup> hewed

Bot whan Medea sawh it brenne,  
 Anon sche gan to sterte and renne<sup>1</sup>  
 The fyri aulters al aboute.  
 Ther was no beste<sup>2</sup> which goth oute  
 5 More wylde than sche semeth ther :  
 Aboute hir schuldres hyng<sup>3</sup> hir her,  
 As thogh sche were oute of hir mynde,  
 And torned in another kynde.<sup>4</sup>  
 Tho lay ther certain wode cleft,  
 10 Of which the pieces nou and eft<sup>5</sup>  
 Sche made hem in the pettes wete,<sup>6</sup>  
 And put hem in the fyri hete,  
 And tok the brond with al the blase,  
 And thries sche began to rase<sup>7</sup>  
 15 Aboute Eson, ther as he slepte ;  
 And eft with water, which sche kepte,  
 Sche made a cercle aboute him thries,  
 And eft with fyr of sulphre twyes ;  
 Ful many another thing sche dede,  
 20 Which is noght writen in this stede.<sup>8</sup>  
 Bot tho sche ran so up and doun,  
 Sche made many a wonder<sup>9</sup> soun,<sup>10</sup>  
 Somtime lich<sup>11</sup> unto the cock,  
 Somtime unto the laverock,<sup>12</sup>  
 25 Somtime kacleth as a hen,  
 Somtime spekth as don the men ;  
 And riht so as hir jargoun strangeth,<sup>13</sup>  
 In sondri wise hir forme changeth.  
 Sche semeth faie,<sup>14</sup> and no womman ;  
 30 For, with the craftes that sche can,  
 Sche was, as who seith,<sup>15</sup> a goddessse ;  
 And what hir liste, more or lesse,

<sup>1</sup> run<sup>2</sup> beast<sup>3</sup> hung<sup>4</sup> turned to another nature<sup>5</sup> again<sup>6</sup> wet<sup>7</sup> race<sup>8</sup> place<sup>9</sup> wonderful<sup>10</sup> sound<sup>11</sup> like<sup>12</sup> lark<sup>13</sup> grows strange<sup>14</sup> fay, fairy<sup>15</sup> as one might say

Sche dede,<sup>1</sup> in bokes as we finde,  
 That passeth over mannes kinde.<sup>2</sup>  
 Bot who that wole<sup>3</sup> of wondres hiere —  
 What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,  
 To make an ende of that sche gan — 5  
 Such merveile herde nevere man.

Apointed in the newe mone,  
 Whan it was time for to done,  
 Sche sette a caldron on the fyr,  
 In which was al the hole atir<sup>4</sup> 10  
 Wheron the medicine stod —  
 Of jus,<sup>5</sup> of water, and of blod —  
 And let it buile<sup>6</sup> in such a plit,<sup>7</sup>  
 Til that sche sawh the spume<sup>8</sup> whyt;  
 And tho sche caste in rynde and rote,<sup>9</sup> 15  
 And sed and flour<sup>10</sup> that was for bote,<sup>11</sup>  
 With many an herbe and many a ston,  
 Wherof sche hath ther many on.  
 And ek Cimpheius the serpent  
 To hire hath alle his scales lent; 20  
 Chelidre hire yaf his addres skin,  
 And sche to builen caste hem in;  
 A part ek of the horned oule,  
 The which men hiere on nyhtes houle;  
 And of a raven, which was told<sup>12</sup> 25  
 Of nyne hundred wynter old,  
 Sche tok the hed with al the bile<sup>13</sup>;  
 And as the medicine it wile,

<sup>1</sup> did<sup>2</sup> surpasses human nature<sup>3</sup> will<sup>4</sup> preparation<sup>5</sup> juice<sup>6</sup> boil<sup>7</sup> manner<sup>8</sup> foam<sup>9</sup> rind and root<sup>10</sup> flower<sup>11</sup> remedy<sup>12</sup> reckoned<sup>13</sup> bill

20. Here the Latin has *nec defuit illic Squamea Cinyphii tenuis membrana chelydri* (*Met.* 7. 271-2), which King translates: 'skin membranous Of Afric's tortoise caught by Cinyps' banks'; Gower quite misunderstands. — Cf. Shakespeare's 'fillet of a fenny snake' (*Macb.* 4. 1. 12).

Sche tok therafter the bouele  
 Of the seewolf,<sup>1</sup> and for the hele<sup>2</sup>  
 Of Eson, with a thousand mo  
 Of thinges that sche hadde tho,  
 5 In that caldroun togedre, as blyve,<sup>3</sup>  
 Sche putte, and tok thanne of olyve  
 A drie branche hem with to stere,<sup>4</sup>  
 The which anon gan floure<sup>5</sup> and bere,  
 And waxe al freissh and grene ayein.  
 10 Whan sche this vertu hadde sein,<sup>6</sup>  
 Sche let the leste drope of alle  
 Upon the bare flor doun falle;  
 Anon ther sprong up flour and gras  
 Where as the drope falle was,  
 15 And wox anon al medwe-grene,<sup>7</sup>  
 So that it mihte wel be sene.  
 Medea thanne knew and wiste  
 Hir medicine is for to triste,<sup>8</sup>  
 And goth to Eson ther he lay,  
 20 And tok a swerd was of assay,<sup>9</sup>  
 With which a wounde upon his side  
 Sche made, that therout mai slyde  
 The blod withinne, which was old  
 And sek<sup>10</sup> and trouble<sup>11</sup> and fieble and cold.  
 25 And tho sche tok unto his us<sup>12</sup>  
 Of herbes al the beste jus,  
 And poured it into his wounde;  
 That made his veynes fulle and sounde.  
 And tho sche made his wounde clos,  
 30 And tok his hand, and up he ros;

<sup>1</sup> shark; Ovid means the werwolf<sup>5</sup> flower<sup>9</sup> proof, tried qualities<sup>2</sup> recovery<sup>6</sup> seen<sup>10</sup> sick<sup>3</sup> as quickly (as possible)<sup>7</sup> meadow-green<sup>11</sup> turbid<sup>4</sup> to stir them with<sup>8</sup> trust<sup>12</sup> use

8. 'And lo! the sere wood in the caldron's heat Grew sudden green, and clad itself with leaves Afresh, and heavy drooped with berried fruit' (Ovid, tr. King).

And tho sche yaf him drink a drauhte,  
 Of which his youthe<sup>1</sup> ayein he cauhte,<sup>2</sup>  
 His hed, his herte, and his visage  
 Lich unto twenty wynter age.  
 Hise hore<sup>3</sup> heres<sup>4</sup> were away;  
 And lich unto the freisshe Maii,  
 Whan passed ben the colde schoures,<sup>5</sup>  
 Riht so recovereth he his floures.

5

## SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (about 1380) has been called by Gaston Paris the jewel of English mediæval literature (*Hist. Litt. de la France* 30. 73), and by Schofield (*Eng. Lit. from the Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 215) 'incomparably the best of the English romances, and one of the finest in any language.' Of the unknown author Schofield adds: 'Next to Chaucer his contemporary, he is perhaps the greatest of our mediæval poets.'

The romance has been edited by Madden (*Syr Gawayne*), 1839, and by Morris (E.E.T.S. No. 4), 1864 (revised by Gollancz, 1897). For general accounts of the author and his work, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 357-373 (Gollancz), and Osgood's edition of *The Pearl*, pp. xi, xlvii-lix. A good prose translation is that by K. G. T. Webster (Boston, 1916), and there is a humorous adaptation of the poem in modern verse by Charlton M. Lewis (*Gawayne and the Green Knight: a Fairy Tale*), Boston, 1903.

The story is probably from a French or Anglo-Norman source; for analogues, see Madden's edition, pp. 305-7; M. C. Thomas, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* (Zurich, 1883), pp. 34-68; Gaston Paris, as above, 30. 75-7; Weston, pp. 88-102; Kittredge, *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge, 1916).

The incident of the beheading is found in the *Fled Bricrend* (translated in *Irish Texts Soc.*, Vol. 2), an Irish tale at least as early as 1100, in which the hero Cuchulinn undergoes the test (Gaston Paris, p. 77; Weston, pp. 92 ff.).

It is an interesting fact that Richard de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1382-1439), a reputed descendant of the legendary Guy of Warwick, and 'a brave and chivalrous warrior in an age of chivalry,' entered the lists at Guines, near Calais, in the character of 'the grene knyght' on Jan. 6 (Twelfth Day) of either 1416 or 1417, and unhorsed a French knight, an exploit which he equaled on the two following days (Kittredge, *Harvard Notes* 5. 94-95). A recent article, dealing with the connection between this poem and the Order of the Garter, by Isaac Jackson, will be found in *Anglia* 37. 393-423; this author

<sup>1</sup> youth  
<sup>2</sup> caught

<sup>3</sup> hoar  
<sup>4</sup> hairs, hair

<sup>5</sup> showers

believes the date to be 1362. Chambers sees in the Green Knight a form of the fertilization-spirit (*The Medieval Stage* 1. 117, 185-186).

The language of our author presents peculiar difficulties, as does that of the whole school of alliterative poets which flourished during the second half of the fourteenth and the early years of the fifteenth centuries. Of this school Gollancz (p. 373) considers that he may well have been the master.

The poem is long, and full of incident and description. Its story runs thus: While Arthur's court is feasting at Camelot on New Year's Day, a knight, all in green, and riding a green charger, rides into the hall. He challenges any knight present to give him a stroke with his battle-axe, on the understanding that it is to be rendered back to him a year later. All shrink back but Arthur's nephew, Gawain, who smites off the knight's head, whereupon the latter rides away with the head in his hand. Toward the end of the year, Gawain sets out to find the knight, whom he eventually encounters. After various temptations, he endures the return-blow—which, however, inflicts but a slight wound—and later goes back to Arthur's court. (For more extended analyses, see J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Gawain*, pp. 86-88; Schofield, pp. 215-217; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 364-365; Morris' ed., pp. viii-xxi.)

Morris has thus summarized the part of the poem which precedes our first extract: 'Arthur, the greatest of Britain's kings, holds the Christmas festival at Camelot, surrounded by the celebrated knights of the Round Table, . . . and ladies the loveliest that ever had life. This noble company celebrate the New Year by a religious service, by the bestowal of gifts, and the most joyous mirth. Lords and ladies take their seats at the table—Queen Guenever, the grey-eyed, gaily dressed, sits at the dais. . . . Arthur, in mood as joyful as a child, . . . declares that he will not eat nor sit long at the table until some adventurous thing has occurred to mark the return of the New Year.

'The first course [is] announced with cracking of trumpets, with the noise of nakers and noble pipes.'

Our extracts are lines 130-249, 2212-2478. The final *z* (for *s*) at the end of words is frequently represented in the MS. by *ȝ*; here it is uniformly printed as *z*.

Now wyl I of hor<sup>1</sup> servise say yow no more,  
 For uch<sup>2</sup> wyge<sup>3</sup> may wel wite<sup>4</sup> no wont<sup>5</sup> þat þer were;  
 Anoþer noyse ful newe negeð<sup>6</sup> bilive,<sup>7</sup>  
 þat þe lude<sup>8</sup> mygt haf leve lifode<sup>9</sup> to cach.<sup>10</sup>  
 5 For uneþe<sup>11</sup> watz<sup>12</sup> þe noyce<sup>13</sup> not a whyle<sup>14</sup> sesed,<sup>15</sup>  
 And þe fyrst cource in þe court kyndely<sup>16</sup> served,

1 their

2 each

3 man

4 know

5 want

6 drew nigh

7 on a sudden

8 people

9 food

10 take

11 scarcely

12 was

13 noise (with which the first course  
 was announced)

14 but just

15 ceased

16 duly



þer hales<sup>1</sup> in at þe halle-dor an aghlich<sup>2</sup> mayster,<sup>3</sup>  
 On<sup>4</sup> þe most<sup>5</sup> on þe molde<sup>6</sup> on mesure hyghe;  
 Fro þe swyre<sup>7</sup> to þe swange<sup>8</sup> so sware<sup>9</sup> and so pik,  
 And his lyndes<sup>10</sup> and his lymes so longe and so grete,  
 Half etayn<sup>11</sup> in erde<sup>12</sup> I hope<sup>13</sup> þat he were.  
 Bot mon most I algate<sup>14</sup> mynn<sup>15</sup> hym to bene,  
 And þat þe myriest<sup>16</sup> in his muckel<sup>17</sup> þat myȝt ride;  
 For of bak and of brest al<sup>18</sup> were his bodi sturne,<sup>19</sup>  
 Bot<sup>20</sup> his wombe<sup>21</sup> and his wast were worthily smale,  
 And alle his fetures<sup>22</sup> folzande,<sup>23</sup> in forme þat he hade,  
 Ful clene<sup>24</sup>;

For wonder of his hue<sup>25</sup> men hade,  
 Set in his semblaunt<sup>26</sup> sene<sup>27</sup>;  
 He ferde<sup>28</sup> as<sup>29</sup> freke<sup>30</sup> were fade,<sup>31</sup>  
 And overal<sup>32</sup> enker-grene.<sup>33</sup>

Ande al grayped<sup>34</sup> in grene þis gome<sup>35</sup> and his wedes,<sup>36</sup>  
 A strayt<sup>37</sup> cote<sup>38</sup> ful streȝt,<sup>39</sup> þat stek on<sup>40</sup> his sides,  
 A mere<sup>41</sup> mantile abof, mensked<sup>42</sup> withinne/  
 With pelure<sup>43</sup> pured<sup>44</sup> apert<sup>45</sup> þe pane<sup>46</sup> ful clene,<sup>47</sup>  
 With blype<sup>48</sup> blaunner<sup>49</sup> ful bryȝt, and his hod<sup>50</sup> bope,  
 þat watz lagt<sup>51</sup> fro his lokkez, and layde on his schulderes;  
 Heme<sup>52</sup> wel-haled,<sup>53</sup> hose of þat same grene,

- 1 rushes  
 2 terrible  
 3 lord  
 4 one  
 5 largest  
 6 mold, earth  
 7 neck  
 8 loins  
 9 square  
 10 loins  
 11 giant (OE. *eoten*)  
 12 earth  
 13 believe  
 14 nevertheless  
 15 think  
 16 most agreeable (?)  
 17 bigness  
 18 though  
 19 stalwart  
 20 yet  
 21 belly  
 22 parts of his body  
 23 accordingly  
 24 fine  
 25 MS. hwe  
 26 appearance  
 27 plain, manifest  
 28 acted  
 29 like  
 30 man  
 31 vigorous  
 32 all over  
 33 dark (inky) green  
 34 arrayed  
 35 man  
 36 apparel

- 37 tight-fitting  
 38 tunic  
 39 straight  
 40 clung to  
 41 beautiful (OE. *mære*)  
 42 adorned  
 43 fur  
 44 shorn close, so as to show  
 45 only one color  
 46 evidently  
 47 cloth  
 48 fair  
 49 gay  
 50 (white) fur  
 51 hood  
 52 caught  
 53 bordered  
 54 trimmed (?) drawn up

- þat spenet<sup>1</sup> on his sparlyr,<sup>2</sup> and clene spures under,  
 Of bryzt golde upon silk bordes<sup>3</sup> barred ful ryche,<sup>4</sup>  
 And scholes<sup>5</sup> under schankes,<sup>6</sup> þere þe schalk<sup>7</sup> rides;  
 And alle his vesture verayly watz clene verdure,<sup>8</sup>  
 5 Boþe þe barres of his belt and oþer blyþe stones,  
 þat were richely rayled<sup>9</sup> in his aray clene,  
 Aboutte hymself and his sadel, upon silk werkez.<sup>10</sup>  
 þat were to tor<sup>11</sup> for to telle of tryfles þe halue,<sup>12</sup>  
 þat were enbrauded<sup>13</sup> abof wyth bryddes and flyges,<sup>14</sup>  
 10 With gay gaudi<sup>15</sup> grene,<sup>16</sup> þe golde ay in myddes.  
 þe pendauntes of his payttrure,<sup>17</sup> þe proude cropure,<sup>18</sup>  
 His molaynes,<sup>19</sup> and alle þe metail anamayld<sup>20</sup> was þenne;  
 þe steropes þat he stod on stayned of þe same,  
 And his arsounz<sup>21</sup> al after, and his apel<sup>22</sup> sturtes,<sup>23</sup>  
 15 þat ever glemered<sup>24</sup> and glent<sup>25</sup> al of grene stones.  
 þe fole<sup>26</sup> þat he ferkkes<sup>27</sup> on, fyn<sup>28</sup> of þat ilke,<sup>29</sup>  
 Sertayn<sup>30</sup>;

- A grene hors gret and pikke,  
 A stede ful stif to strayne,<sup>31</sup>  
 20 In brawden<sup>32</sup> brydel quik,<sup>33</sup>  
 To þe gome he watz ful gayn.<sup>34</sup>

- Wel gay watz þis gome gered<sup>35</sup> in grene,  
 And þe here of his hed of his hors swete<sup>36</sup>;  
 Fayre fannand<sup>37</sup> fax<sup>38</sup> umbefoldes<sup>39</sup> his schulderes;  
 25 A much<sup>40</sup> berd as a busk<sup>41</sup> over his brest henges,

1 fastened

2 calf

3 edges

4 richly

5 (þ) (shoes)

6 legs

7 man

8 pure green

9 disposed

10 works

11 too tedious

12 half

13 embroidered

14 flies

15 yellowish

16 MS. of grene

17 poitrel, horse's breastplate

18 crupper

19 bits

20 enameled

21 saddle-bows

22 noble

23 stirrups (þ)

24 gleamed

25 sparkled

26 foal, steed

27 pushes forward

28 fine, choice

29 same (color)

30 certainly

31 curb

32 embroidered

33 lively

34 obedient

35 arrayed

36 fine

37 waving

38 hair

39 falls about

40 great

41 bush

þat wyth his higlich <sup>1</sup> here, þat of his hed reches,  
 Watz evesed <sup>2</sup> al umbetorne, <sup>3</sup> abof his elbowes,  
 þat half his armes þerunder were halched <sup>4</sup> in þe wyse  
 Of a kynges capados, <sup>5</sup> þat closes <sup>6</sup> his swyre.  
 Þe mane of þat mayn <sup>7</sup> hors much to hit lyke, 5  
 Wel cresped <sup>8</sup> and cemmed <sup>9</sup> wyth knottes ful mony,  
 Folden in wyth fildore <sup>10</sup> aboute þe fayre grene,  
 Ay a <sup>11</sup> herle <sup>12</sup> of þe here, anoper of golde;  
 Þe tayl and his toppyng <sup>13</sup> twynnen <sup>14</sup> of a sute, <sup>15</sup>  
 And bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bryzt grene, 10  
 Dubbed <sup>16</sup> wyth ful dere stonez, as þe dok lasted, <sup>17</sup>  
 Syþen <sup>18</sup> þrawen <sup>19</sup> wyth a þwong <sup>20</sup> a þwarle <sup>21</sup> knot alofte,  
 Þer mony bellez ful bryzt of brende <sup>22</sup> golde rungen.  
 Such a fole upon folde, <sup>23</sup> ne freke þat hym rydes,  
 Watz never sene in þat sale <sup>24</sup> wyth syzt er þat tyme, 15  
 With yze <sup>25</sup>;

He loked as layt <sup>26</sup> so lyzt, <sup>27</sup>

So sayd al þat hym syze, <sup>28</sup>

Hit semed as no mon myzt

Under his dynttez <sup>29</sup> dryze. <sup>30</sup> 20

Wheþer <sup>31</sup> hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer, <sup>32</sup>  
 Ne no pysan, <sup>33</sup> ne no plate þat pented <sup>34</sup> to armes,  
 Ne no schafte, <sup>35</sup> ne no schelde, to schune <sup>36</sup> ne to smyte,  
 Bot in his on <sup>37</sup> honde he hade a holyn bobbe, <sup>38</sup>  
 þat is grattest <sup>39</sup> in grene when grevez <sup>40</sup> ar bare, 25

<sup>1</sup> splendid

<sup>2</sup> clipped

<sup>3</sup> around

<sup>4</sup> enlaced (with the hair)

<sup>5</sup> hood

<sup>6</sup> encloses

<sup>7</sup> great

<sup>8</sup> crisped

<sup>9</sup> combed

<sup>10</sup> gold thread

<sup>11</sup> one

<sup>12</sup> filament, hair

<sup>13</sup> crest (mane)

<sup>14</sup> matched

<sup>15</sup> kind

<sup>16</sup> adorned

<sup>17</sup> as far as the dock (fleshy  
part) extended

<sup>18</sup> beyond that point

<sup>19</sup> twisted

<sup>20</sup> thong

<sup>21</sup> tight (?) *manic. 71*

<sup>22</sup> burnished

<sup>23</sup> earth

<sup>24</sup> hall

<sup>25</sup> eye

<sup>26</sup> lightning

<sup>27</sup> bright

<sup>28</sup> saw

<sup>29</sup> strokes

<sup>30</sup> endure

<sup>31</sup> yet

<sup>32</sup> neither

<sup>33</sup> gorget

<sup>34</sup> pertained

<sup>35</sup> spear

<sup>36</sup> protect; MS. schwe

<sup>37</sup> one

<sup>38</sup> holly-branch

<sup>39</sup> most pronounced

<sup>40</sup> groves

And an ax in his oþer, a hoge <sup>1</sup> and unmete,<sup>2</sup>  
 A spetos <sup>3</sup> sparþe <sup>4</sup> to expoun in spelle quoso myzt <sup>5</sup>;  
 Þe hede of an elnþerde,<sup>6</sup> þe large lenkþe <sup>7</sup> hade,  
 Þe grayn <sup>8</sup> al of grene stele and of golde hewen,  
 5 Þe bit <sup>9</sup> burnyst bryzt, with a brod egge,<sup>10</sup>  
 As wel schapen to schere <sup>11</sup> as scharp rasores;  
 Þe stele <sup>12</sup> of a stif staf þe sturne <sup>13</sup> hit <sup>14</sup> bigrypte,<sup>15</sup>  
 Þat watz wounden <sup>16</sup> wyth yrn to þe wandez <sup>17</sup> ende,  
 And al bigraven <sup>18</sup> with grene, in gracious <sup>19</sup> werkes <sup>20</sup>;  
 10 A lace <sup>21</sup> lapped aboute, þat louked <sup>22</sup> at þe hede,  
 And so after <sup>23</sup> þe halme <sup>24</sup> halched <sup>25</sup> ful ofte,  
 Wyth tryed <sup>26</sup> tasselez þerto <sup>27</sup> tacched <sup>28</sup> innoghe <sup>29</sup>  
 On <sup>30</sup> botounz <sup>31</sup> of þe bryzt grene brayden <sup>32</sup> ful ryche.  
 Þis haþel <sup>33</sup> heldez hym in,<sup>34</sup> and þe halle entres,  
 15 Drivande to þe hege dece,<sup>35</sup> dut <sup>36</sup> he no woþe,<sup>37</sup>  
 Haylsed <sup>38</sup> he never one, bot hege he overloked.<sup>39</sup>  
 Þe fyrst word þat he warp <sup>40</sup>: 'Wher is,' he sayd,  
 'Þe governour of þis gyng <sup>41</sup>? Gladly I wolde  
 Se þat segg <sup>42</sup> in syzt, and with hymself speke  
 20 Raysoun.'

To knygtez he kest <sup>43</sup> his yge,  
 And reled <sup>44</sup> hym up and down,  
 He stemmed,<sup>45</sup> and con <sup>46</sup> studie  
 Quo <sup>47</sup> walt <sup>48</sup> þer most renoun.

1 huge  
 2 immense  
 3 cruel  
 4 sparþ, battle-axe  
 5 whoever might try to make it  
 clear in speech  
 6 ell (long)  
 7 length  
 8 blade  
 9 cutting end  
 10 edge  
 11 shear  
 12 handle  
 13 firmly  
 14 it (the axe-head)  
 15 gripped, clasped  
 16 MS. waunden

17 wand's, handle's  
 18 engraved  
 19 charming  
 20 devices  
 21 cord  
 22 had a fastening  
 23 along  
 24 haulm, stalk (i.e. handle)  
 25 caught  
 26 choice  
 27 to the cord  
 28 attached  
 29 sufficiently; MS. innoghee  
 30 by means of  
 31 buttons  
 32 braided (i.e. the buttons)  
 33 noble

34 takes his way  
 35 dais  
 36 feared  
 37 injury  
 38 saluted  
 39 looked (loftily)  
 40 flung  
 41 company  
 42 man  
 43 cast  
 44 strode  
 45 halted  
 46 began  
 47 who  
 48 bore

Ther watz loking on lenþe,<sup>1</sup> þe lude<sup>2</sup> to beholde,  
 For uch mon had mervayle quat hit mene mygt,  
 þat a hapel and a horse mygt such a hue lach,<sup>3</sup>  
 As growe grene<sup>4</sup> as þe gres — and grener hit semed,  
 Þen<sup>5</sup> grene aumayl<sup>6</sup> on golde lowande<sup>7</sup> brygter. 5  
 Al studied þat þer stod, and stalked hym nerre,<sup>8</sup>  
 Wyth al þe wonder of<sup>9</sup> þe worlde, what he worch<sup>10</sup> schulde.  
 For fele<sup>11</sup> sellyez<sup>12</sup> had þay sen, bot such never are,<sup>13</sup>  
 Forþi<sup>14</sup> for fantoum and fayryge<sup>15</sup> þe folk þer hit demed;  
 Þerfore to answere watz arge<sup>16</sup> mony apel<sup>17</sup> freke,<sup>18</sup> 10  
 And al stouned<sup>19</sup> at his steven,<sup>20</sup> and ston-stil seten<sup>21</sup>  
 In a swoghe<sup>22</sup> sylence þurȝ þe sale<sup>23</sup> riche,  
 As al were slypped upon<sup>24</sup> slepe — so slaked<sup>25</sup> hor<sup>26</sup> lotez<sup>27</sup> —  
 In hyȝe<sup>28</sup>;  
 I deme hit not<sup>29</sup> al for doute,<sup>30</sup> 15  
 Bot sum<sup>31</sup> for cortaysye —  
 Bot let<sup>32</sup> hym<sup>33</sup> þat al schulde loute<sup>34</sup>  
 Cast<sup>35</sup> unto þat wyȝe.<sup>36</sup>

When the time of the return visit approaches (see introductory note), Gawain sets out, and on Christmas Eve reaches a castle, where he is hospitably received by its lord and lady. Here he learns that the Green Chapel, his destination, is only two miles distant, and accordingly accepts an invitation to stay till New Year's morning. During the host's hunting-expeditions, his wife makes love to Gawain, but is unsuccessful in her endeavors; the kisses she bestows upon him are by him passed on to the host at nightfall. However, Gawain does accept from the lady a green girdle, which is to render him secure from every danger. On his resort to the Green Chapel, he hears the sound as of a blade sharpened on a grindstone.

<sup>1</sup> for a long time<sup>2</sup> man<sup>3</sup> obtain<sup>4</sup> as to grow as green<sup>5</sup> than<sup>6</sup> enamel<sup>7</sup> shining<sup>8</sup> nearer<sup>9</sup> in<sup>10</sup> do<sup>11</sup> many<sup>12</sup> wonders<sup>13</sup> before<sup>14</sup> wherefore<sup>15</sup> enchantment<sup>16</sup> timid<sup>17</sup> noble<sup>18</sup> knight<sup>19</sup> were astonished<sup>20</sup> voice<sup>21</sup> sat<sup>22</sup> impotent, dead<sup>23</sup> hall<sup>24</sup> as if all had slipped (slid)  
into sleep<sup>25</sup> relaxed (or subdued)<sup>26</sup> their<sup>27</sup> features (or looks; possibly  
voices)<sup>28</sup> haste<sup>29</sup> was not<sup>30</sup> fear<sup>31</sup> but that some were silent<sup>32</sup> but that they let<sup>33</sup> Arthur<sup>34</sup> reverence<sup>35</sup> make advances (?)<sup>36</sup> champion

Thenne þe knygt con calle ful hyge<sup>1</sup>:

'Who stigtlez<sup>2</sup> in þis sted,<sup>3</sup> me steven<sup>4</sup> to holde?

For now is gode Gawayn goande<sup>5</sup> rygt here;

If any wyge<sup>6</sup> ogt<sup>7</sup> wyl, wynne<sup>8</sup> hider fast,

5 Oþer<sup>9</sup> now oþer<sup>10</sup> never, his nede<sup>11</sup> to spede.<sup>12</sup>'

'Abyde,' quoth on on þe bonke, aboven over his hede,

'And þou schal haf al in hast þat I þe hygt<sup>18</sup> ones.<sup>14</sup>'

Ȝet he<sup>15</sup> rusched on<sup>16</sup> þat rurde<sup>17</sup> rapely<sup>18</sup> a þrowe,<sup>19</sup>

And wyth<sup>20</sup> quettyng<sup>21</sup> awharf,<sup>22</sup> er<sup>23</sup> he wolde lygt<sup>24</sup>;

10 And syþen<sup>25</sup> he keverez<sup>26</sup> bi a cragge, and comez of<sup>27</sup> a hole,

Whyrlande out of a wro,<sup>28</sup> wyth a felle<sup>29</sup> weppen,

A Denez<sup>30</sup> ax nwe<sup>31</sup> dygt,<sup>32</sup> þe dynt with [t]o zelde<sup>33</sup>

With a borelych<sup>34</sup> bytte,<sup>35</sup> bende<sup>36</sup> by þe halme,

Fyled in a fylor,<sup>37</sup> fowre fote large<sup>38</sup> —

15 Hit watz no lasse — bi þat lace þat lemed<sup>39</sup> ful brygt.

And þe gome in þe grene, gered as fyrst —

Boþe þe lyre<sup>40</sup> and þe leggez, lokkez and berde —

Save þat fayre on his fote<sup>41</sup> he foundez<sup>42</sup> on þe erþe,

Sette þe stele<sup>43</sup> to the stone,<sup>44</sup> and stalked bysyde.

20 When he wan to<sup>45</sup> þe watter, per he wade nolde,

He hypped<sup>46</sup> over on hys ax, and orpedly<sup>47</sup> strydez,

Bremly<sup>48</sup> broþe,<sup>49</sup> on a bent,<sup>50</sup> þat brode watz aboute,

On snawe.<sup>51</sup>

1 loudly

2 dwells

3 place

4 word, promise

5 walking

6 man

7 anything

8 let him win (speed)

9 either

10 or

11 needs

12 obtain

13 promised

14 once

15 the Green Knight

16 rushed back to

17 din (made by the grinding)

18 forthwith

19 (for) a time

20 to

21 whetting

22 turned aside

23 before

24 approach

25 afterwards

26 makes his way

27 out of

28 nook

29 cruel

30 Danish

31 newly

32 made ready

33 bestow

34 stout

35 edge

36 bent

37 filing instrument

38 broad

39 gleamed

40 face

41 (instead of on horseback)

42 walks

43 pole

44 (on which he walked)

45 reached

46 leaped

47 boldly

48 vehemently

49 impetuous

50 open field

51 snow

Syr Gawayn þe knygt con mete,  
 He ne lutte <sup>1</sup> hym nopyng lowe ;  
 Þat oþer sayde : ' Now, syr swete,  
 Of steven <sup>2</sup> mon <sup>3</sup> may þe trowe. <sup>4</sup> '

' Gawayn,' quoth þat grene gome, ' God þe mot loke <sup>5</sup> !  
 Iwysse <sup>6</sup> þou art welcom, wyge, to my place,  
 And þou hatz tymed þi travayl <sup>7</sup> as true mon schulde ;  
 And þou knowez þe covenantez kest <sup>8</sup> uus bytwene :  
 At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat <sup>9</sup> þe falled, <sup>10</sup>  
 And I schulde at þis nwe gere zeþly <sup>11</sup> þe quyte. <sup>12</sup> 10  
 And we ar in þis valay, verayly oure one. <sup>13</sup>  
 Here ar no renkes <sup>14</sup> us to rydde, <sup>15</sup> rele <sup>16</sup> as uus likez ;  
 Haf þy <sup>17</sup> py helme of <sup>18</sup> þy hede, and haf here þy pay ;  
 Busk <sup>19</sup> no more debate þen I þe bede <sup>20</sup> þenne,  
 When þou wypped <sup>21</sup> of my hede at a wap one. <sup>22</sup> ' 15  
 ' Nay, bi God,' quoth Gawayn, ' þat <sup>23</sup> me gost <sup>24</sup> lante, <sup>25</sup>  
 I schal gruch <sup>26</sup> þe no grwe, <sup>27</sup> for grem <sup>28</sup> þat fallez ;  
 Bot stygtel <sup>29</sup> þe upon on strok, and I schal stonde styлле,  
 And warp <sup>30</sup> þe no wernyng, <sup>31</sup> to worch as þe lykez,  
 No whare.' 20

He lened with þe nek, and lutte,  
 And schewed þat schyre al bare,  
 And lette <sup>32</sup> as <sup>33</sup> he noȝt dutte, <sup>34</sup>  
 For drede he wolde not dare. <sup>35</sup>

1 bowed  
 2 promise  
 3 one  
 4 believe  
 5 keep, preserve  
 6 surely  
 7 journey  
 8 cast, made  
 9 what  
 10 fell  
 11 straightway  
 12 requite  
 13 by ourselves

14 men, knights  
 15 part, separate  
 16 rush about  
 17 therefore (possibly ; but  
     perhaps delete)  
 18 from off  
 19 make ready  
 20 offered  
 21 didst strike  
 22 one blow only  
 23 who  
 24 spirit, soul  
 25 gave, has given

26 grudge  
 27 particle, bit (*NED.* grue)  
 28 harm  
 29 resolve, settle  
 30 utter  
 31 protest  
 32 acted, behaved  
 33 as though  
 34 doubted  
 35 that he would not shrink

- Then þe gome in þe grene grayped hym swyþe,  
 Gederez up hys grymme tole,<sup>1</sup> Gawayn to smyte;  
 With alle þe bur<sup>2</sup> in his body he ber hit on lofte,<sup>3</sup>  
 Munt<sup>4</sup> as maȝtyly as<sup>5</sup> marre hym he wolde;  
 5 Hade hit dryven adoun as dreg<sup>6</sup> as he atled,<sup>7</sup>  
 þer hade<sup>8</sup> ben ded of his dynt þat<sup>9</sup> doȝty watz ever.  
 Bot Gawayn on þat giserne<sup>10</sup> glyfte<sup>11</sup> hym bysyde,  
 As hit com glydande adoun, on glode<sup>12</sup> hym to schende,<sup>13</sup>  
 And schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.  
 10 þat oþer schalk<sup>14</sup> wyth a schunt<sup>15</sup> þe schene<sup>16</sup> wythhaldez,  
 And þenne repreved he þe prynce with mony prowde wordez:  
 'þou art not Gawayn,' quoth þe gome, 'þat is so goud<sup>17</sup> halden,  
 þat never arȝed<sup>18</sup> for no here,<sup>19</sup> by hylle ne be vale,  
 And now þou fles for ferde,<sup>20</sup> er þou fele harmez<sup>21</sup>;  
 15 Such cowardise of þat knyȝt cowþe<sup>22</sup> I never here.  
 Nawþer fyked<sup>23</sup> I ne flaȝe,<sup>24</sup> freke, quen þou myntest,<sup>25</sup>  
 Ne kest<sup>26</sup> no kavelacoun<sup>27</sup> in kyngez hous Arthor,<sup>28</sup>  
 My hede flaȝ<sup>29</sup> to my fote, and ȝet flaȝ I never;  
 And þou, er any harme hent,<sup>30</sup> arȝez in hert,  
 20 Wherefore þe better burne me burde<sup>31</sup> be called  
 þerfore.'  
 Quoth Gawayn: 'I schunt<sup>32</sup> onez,  
 And so wyl I no more;  
 Bot þaȝ<sup>33</sup> my hede falle on þe stonez,  
 25 I con not hit restore.'<sup>34</sup>

1 tool, weapon

2 force

3 aloft

4 threatened

5 as if

6 straight

7 aimed

8 would have

9 he who

10 axe

11 looked

12 its passage (?)

13 destroy

14 man

15 slant

16 bright (blade)

17 brave

18 trembled

19 host

20 fear

21 before thou art much hurt

22 could

23 flinched

24 fled

25 didst aim

26 raised

27 objection

28 genitive case

29 flew

30 seized

31 I ought to

32 dodged

33 though

34 (as the Green Knight did)



Bot busk,<sup>1</sup> burne,<sup>2</sup> bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt,  
 Dele to me my destine, and do hit out of honde,  
 For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start<sup>3</sup> no more,  
 Til þyn ax have me hitte — haf here my trawpe.  
 'Haf at þe þenne,' quoth þat oþer, and heves hit alofte, 5  
 And waytez<sup>4</sup> as wroþely as he wode were;  
 He myntez<sup>5</sup> at hym maȝtyly,<sup>6</sup> bot not þe mon ryvez,<sup>7</sup>  
 Withhelde heterly<sup>8</sup> h[i]s honde, er hit hurt myȝt.  
 Gawayn graypely<sup>9</sup> hit bydez, and glent<sup>10</sup> with no membre,  
 Bot stode styлле as þe ston, oþer<sup>11</sup> a stubbe auþer,<sup>12</sup> 10  
 þat rapeled<sup>13</sup> is in roche<sup>14</sup> grounde, with rotez a hundreth.  
 þen muryly efte con<sup>15</sup> he mele,<sup>16</sup> þe mon in þe grene:  
 'So now þou hatz þi hert holle,<sup>17</sup> hitte me bihov[e]s;  
 Halde þe now þe hyȝe<sup>18</sup> hode<sup>19</sup> þat Arþur þe razt,<sup>20</sup>  
 And kepe<sup>21</sup> py kanel<sup>22</sup> at þis kest,<sup>23</sup> ȝif hit<sup>24</sup> kever<sup>25</sup> may.' 15  
 Gawayn ful gryndelly<sup>26</sup> with greme<sup>27</sup> þenne sayde,  
 'Wy þresch on, þou pro<sup>28</sup> mon, þou þretez to longe,  
 I hope<sup>29</sup> þat þi hert arȝe<sup>30</sup> wyth þyn awen selven.'  
 'Forsoþe,' quoth þat oþer freke,<sup>31</sup> 'so felly<sup>32</sup> þou spekez,  
 I wyl no lenger on lyte<sup>33</sup> lette<sup>34</sup> þin ernde<sup>35</sup> 20

Rigte nowe.'

þenne tas<sup>36</sup> he hym stryþe<sup>37</sup> to stryke,  
 And frounses<sup>38</sup> boþe lyppe and browe.  
 No mervayle þaz hym<sup>39</sup> myslyke,  
 þat hoped of no rescowe.<sup>40</sup> 25

1 make ready  
 2 man  
 3 flinch  
 4 attends  
 5 aims  
 6 lustily  
 7 gashes  
 8 with a jerk  
 9 duly  
 10 shrank  
 11 or  
 12 either  
 13 twisted  
 14 rocky

15 did  
 16 speak  
 17 whole  
 18 high  
 19 hood  
 20 gave (reached)  
 21 guard  
 22 neck  
 23 blow  
 24 the hood  
 25 cover (the neck)  
 26 roughly  
 27 anger  
 28 fierce

29 suspect  
 30 grows cowardly  
 31 man  
 32 rudely  
 33 tarrying  
 34 delay  
 35 business  
 36 takes  
 37 stride (firm position on his feet)  
 38 wrinkles  
 39 Gawain  
 40 rescue

He lyftes lygtly his lome,<sup>1</sup> and let hit doun fayre,<sup>2</sup>  
 With þe barbe of þe bitte<sup>3</sup> bi þe bare nek;  
 Þaȝ he homered<sup>4</sup> heterly,<sup>5</sup> hurt hym no more,  
 Bot snyrt<sup>6</sup> hym on þat on syde, þat severed þe hyde;  
 5 Þe scharp<sup>7</sup> schrank<sup>8</sup> to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre<sup>9</sup> grece,<sup>10</sup>  
 Þat þe schene<sup>11</sup> blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe;  
 And quen þe burne sez þe blode blenk<sup>12</sup> on þe snawe,  
 He sprit<sup>13</sup> forth spenne-fote,<sup>14</sup> more þen a spere lenþe,  
 Hent<sup>15</sup> heterly<sup>5</sup> his helme, and on his hed cast,  
 10 Schot<sup>16</sup> with his schulderes his fayre schelde under,  
 Braydez<sup>17</sup> out a bryȝt sworde, and bremely<sup>18</sup> he spekez;  
 Never syn þat he watz burne borne of his moder,  
 Watz he never in þis worlde wyȝe<sup>19</sup> half so blyþe<sup>20</sup>:  
 ' Blynne,<sup>21</sup> burne, of þy bur,<sup>22</sup> bede<sup>23</sup> me no mo;  
 15 I haf a stroke in þis sted withoute stryf hent,<sup>24</sup>  
 And if þow rechez<sup>25</sup> me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,<sup>26</sup>  
 And ȝelde ȝederly<sup>27</sup> aȝayn, and þerto ȝe tryst,<sup>28</sup>  
 And foo<sup>29</sup>;

Bot on stroke here me fallez,<sup>30</sup>  
 20 þe covenant schap<sup>31</sup> ryȝt soo,  
 [Sikered]<sup>32</sup> in Arþurez hallez,  
 And þerfore hende now hoo<sup>33</sup>!

The hapel<sup>34</sup> heldet<sup>35</sup> hym fro, and on his ax rested,  
 Sette þe schaft upon schore,<sup>36</sup> and to þe scharp lened,  
 25 And loket to þe leude<sup>37</sup> þat on þe launde<sup>38</sup> ȝede,  
 How þat dogty dredles dervely<sup>39</sup> þer stondez,

<sup>1</sup> weapon<sup>2</sup> full<sup>3</sup> blade<sup>4</sup> smote<sup>5</sup> swiftly<sup>6</sup> wounded (?)<sup>7</sup> axe<sup>8</sup> pierced<sup>9</sup> bright<sup>10</sup> grease (fleshy part of the neck)<sup>11</sup> bright<sup>12</sup> shine<sup>13</sup> started<sup>14</sup> swift-foot (?)<sup>15</sup> grasped<sup>16</sup> slipped<sup>17</sup> draws<sup>18</sup> boldly<sup>19</sup> man<sup>20</sup> glad<sup>21</sup> stop<sup>22</sup> onslaught<sup>23</sup> attempt<sup>24</sup> accepted<sup>25</sup> dealest (handest me out)<sup>26</sup> requite, retaliate<sup>27</sup> promptly<sup>28</sup> make up your mind<sup>29</sup> (?)<sup>30</sup> is due<sup>31</sup> directed<sup>32</sup> ratified<sup>33</sup> stop<sup>34</sup> knight<sup>35</sup> turned away<sup>36</sup> earth<sup>37</sup> man<sup>38</sup> plain<sup>39</sup> bravely

Armed ful azlez<sup>1</sup>; in hert hit hym lykez.  
 Penn he melez muryly, wyth a much steven,<sup>2</sup>  
 And wyth a r[a]ykande<sup>3</sup> rurde<sup>4</sup> he to þe renk<sup>5</sup> sayde:  
 ' Bolde burne,<sup>6</sup> on þis bent<sup>7</sup> be not so gryndel<sup>8</sup>;  
 No mon here unmanerly þe mysboden<sup>9</sup> hadde, 5  
 Ne kyd,<sup>10</sup> bot as coveaunde,<sup>11</sup> at kynges kort<sup>12</sup> schaped<sup>13</sup>;  
 I hyzt<sup>14</sup> þe a strok, and þou hit hatz; halde þe wel payed;  
 I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryktes alle oper;  
 Ȝif I deliver<sup>15</sup> had bene, a boffet, paraunter,  
 I coupe wroþeloker<sup>16</sup> haf waret,<sup>17</sup> [and] to þe haf wrogt anger. 10  
 Fyrst I manded<sup>18</sup> þe muryly, with a mynt<sup>19</sup> one,<sup>20</sup>  
 And rove<sup>21</sup> þe wyth no rof,<sup>22</sup> sore<sup>23</sup> with ryzt I þe profered,  
 For þe forwarde þat we fest<sup>24</sup> in þe fyrst nygt,  
 And þou trystly þe trawþe and trwly me haldez;  
 Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde; 15  
 Þat oper munt<sup>25</sup> for þe morne, mon,<sup>26</sup> I þe profered,  
 Þou kyssedes my clere<sup>27</sup> wyf, þe cossez<sup>28</sup> me ragtez,<sup>29</sup>  
 For boþe two here<sup>30</sup> I þe bede bot two bare myntes,  
 Boute scape<sup>31</sup>;  
 Trwe mon<sup>32</sup> trwe restore, 20  
 Þenne þar mon<sup>32</sup> drede no waþe<sup>33</sup>;  
 At þe prid þou fayled þore,<sup>34</sup>  
 And þerfor þat tappe<sup>35</sup> ta þe.<sup>36</sup>

For hit is my wede<sup>37</sup> þat þou werez, þat ilke woven girdel,  
 Myn owen wyf hit þe weved, I wot wel forsoþe; 25  
 Now know I wel þy cosses, and þy costes<sup>38</sup> als,<sup>39</sup>

1 fearless  
 2 great voice  
 3 rushing, loud  
 4 sound  
 5 knight  
 6 man  
 7 field  
 8 fierce, angry  
 9 offered wrong  
 10 treated  
 11 agreed upon  
 12 court  
 13 arranged

14 promised  
 15 nimble  
 16 more fiercely  
 17 dealt  
 18 menaced  
 19 aimed blow  
 20 only  
 21 cleaved  
 22 cut, blow  
 23 wound  
 24 pledged  
 25 aimed blow  
 26 man

27 fair  
 28 kisses  
 29 gavest  
 30 both of these two  
 31 without injury  
 32 must  
 33 danger, injury  
 34 there  
 35 stroke  
 36 take to thyself  
 37 garment  
 38 qualities  
 39 also

- And þe wowyng of my wyf, I wrogt it myselven;  
 I sende<sup>1</sup> hir to asay<sup>2</sup> þe, and, sothly me þynkkez,  
 On<sup>3</sup> þe fautlest<sup>4</sup> freke þat ever on fote gede<sup>5</sup>;  
 As perle bi<sup>6</sup> þe quite<sup>7</sup> pese<sup>8</sup> is of prys more,  
 5 So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oper gay knyȝtez.  
 Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, syr, and lewte<sup>9</sup> yow wanted,<sup>10</sup>  
 Bot þat watz for no wylyde<sup>11</sup> werke, ne wowyng nauper,  
 Bot for ȝe lufud your lyf, — þe lasse I yow blame.<sup>7</sup>  
 Þat oper stif<sup>12</sup> mon in study stod a gret whyle;  
 10 So agreved for greme<sup>13</sup> he gryed<sup>14</sup> withinne,  
 Alle þe blode of his brest blende<sup>15</sup> in his face,  
 Þat al he schrank for schome, þat<sup>16</sup> þe schalk talked.  
 Þe forme<sup>17</sup> worde upon folde<sup>18</sup> þat þe freke meled:  
 'Corsed woȝth<sup>19</sup> cowarddyse and covetyse boþe!  
 15 In yow is vylany and vyse, þat vertue disstryez.'  
 Þenne he tagt to<sup>20</sup> þe knot, and þe kest<sup>21</sup> lawsez,<sup>22</sup>  
 Brayde<sup>23</sup> broþely<sup>24</sup> þe belt to þe burne selven:  
 'Lo! þer þe falssyng,<sup>25</sup> foule mot hit falle!<sup>26</sup>  
 For care<sup>27</sup> of þy knokke, cowardyse me tagt  
 20 To acorde mfe with covetyse, my kynde<sup>28</sup> to forsake,  
 Þat is larges<sup>29</sup> and lewte, þat longez to<sup>30</sup> knyȝtez.  
 Now am I fawty,<sup>31</sup> and falce, and ferde<sup>32</sup> haf been ever;  
 Of trecherye and untrawþe boþe bityde<sup>33</sup> sorge<sup>34</sup>  
 And care!  
 25 I biknowe yow,<sup>35</sup> knyȝt, here styлле,  
 Al fawty is my fare<sup>36</sup>;

1 sent  
 2 try, tempt  
 3 one  
 4 the most faultless  
 5 went (OE. *zode*)  
 6 compared with  
 7 white  
 8 peas  
 9 loyalty  
 10 lacked  
 11 wily, intriguing  
 12 brave

13 vexation, anger  
 14 was agitated  
 15 blent, mingled  
 16 while  
 17 first  
 18 earth  
 19 be  
 20 seized hold of  
 21 twist  
 22 looses  
 23 threw  
 24 angrily

25 falsity  
 26 may foul befall it  
 27 fear  
 28 nature  
 29 generosity  
 30 befits  
 31 faulty  
 32 afeared  
 33 come  
 34 sorrow  
 35 confess to you  
 36 conduct

Letez me overtake <sup>1</sup> your wylle,  
And efte <sup>2</sup> I schal beware.'

Thenn loze <sup>3</sup> þat oper leude, and luflyly <sup>4</sup> sayde,  
' I halde hit hardily <sup>5</sup> hole, <sup>6</sup> þe harme þat I hade ;  
þou art confessed so clene, beknownen of þy mysses, <sup>7</sup> 5  
And hatz þe penaunce apert, <sup>8</sup> of <sup>9</sup> þe poynt of myn egge, <sup>10</sup>  
I halde þe polysed <sup>11</sup> of þat plygt, <sup>12</sup> and pured <sup>13</sup> as clene,  
As <sup>14</sup> þou hadez never forfeted <sup>15</sup> syþen þou watz fyrst borne.  
And I gif þe, syr, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed ;  
For hit is grene as my goune, syr Gawayn, ȝe maye 10  
þenk upon þis ilke þrepe, <sup>16</sup> þer <sup>17</sup> þou forth þryngez <sup>18</sup>  
Among prynces of prys, and <sup>19</sup> þis a pure token  
Of þe chaunce <sup>20</sup> of þe grene chapel, at <sup>21</sup> chevalrous knyȝtez ;  
And ȝe schal in þis nwe ȝer aȝayn <sup>22</sup> to my wonez, <sup>23</sup>  
And we schyn <sup>24</sup> revel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest, 15  
Ful bene.' <sup>25</sup>

þer laped <sup>26</sup> hym fast <sup>27</sup> þe lorde,  
And sayde : ' With my wyf, I wene,  
We schal yow wel acorde, <sup>28</sup>  
þat watz your enmy kene.' 20

' Nay, forsoþe,' quoth þe segge, <sup>29</sup> and sesed <sup>30</sup> hys helme,  
And hatz hit of <sup>31</sup> hendely, <sup>32</sup> and þe hapel <sup>33</sup> þonkkez :  
' I haf sojorned sadly, sele <sup>34</sup> yow bytyde,  
And He ȝelde <sup>35</sup> hit ȝow ȝare, <sup>36</sup> þat ȝarkkez <sup>37</sup> al menskes <sup>38</sup> !

1 understand  
2 afterwards  
3 laughed  
4 courteously  
5 assuredly  
6 cured  
7 with avowal made of thy sins  
8 openly, manifestly  
9 from  
10 (edge of) axe  
11 absolved  
12 offense  
13 purged

14 as if  
15 sinned  
16 reproof, rebuke  
17 when  
18 dost crowd, press  
19 and keep  
20 adventure  
21 on the part of  
22 come again  
23 dwelling  
24 shall  
25 genially  
26 invited

27 urgently  
28 bring into friendly relations  
29 knight  
30 seized  
31 off  
32 courteously  
33 warrior  
34 blessing, prosperity  
35 may he reward you for it  
36 soon  
37 bestows  
38 honors

- And comaundez <sup>1</sup> me to þat cortays, your comlych <sup>2</sup> fere,<sup>3</sup>  
 Boþe þat on and þat oþer, myn honoured ladyez,  
 Þat þus hor knygt wyth hor kest <sup>4</sup> han koyntly <sup>6</sup> bigyled.  
 Bot hit is no ferly,<sup>6</sup> þaȝ a fole madde,<sup>7</sup>
- 5 And þurȝ wyles of wymmen be wonen to sorge ;  
 For so watz Adam in erde <sup>8</sup> with one bygyled,  
 And Salamon with fele sere,<sup>9</sup> and Samson eftsonez,<sup>10</sup>  
 Dalyda <sup>11</sup> dalt <sup>12</sup> hym hys wyrde,<sup>13</sup> and Davyth þerafter  
 Watz blended <sup>14</sup> with Barsabe,<sup>15</sup> þat much bale <sup>16</sup> poled.<sup>17</sup>
- 10 Now þese were wrathed <sup>18</sup> wyth her wyles, hit were a wynne <sup>19</sup> huge  
 'To luf hom wel, and leve <sup>20</sup> hem not — a leude þat coupe <sup>21</sup> —  
 For þes wer forne <sup>22</sup> þe freest <sup>23</sup> þat folȝed alle þe sele,  
 Excellently of alle pyse oþer <sup>24</sup> under hevenryche  
 þat mused <sup>25</sup> ;
- 15 And alle þay were biwyled,<sup>26</sup>  
 With wymmen þat þay used <sup>27</sup> ;  
 Þaȝ I be now bigyled,  
 Me þink me burde <sup>28</sup> be excused.'
- ' Bot your gordel,' quoth Gawayn — ' God yow forȝelde <sup>29</sup> ! —
- 20 þat wyl I welde <sup>30</sup> wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne <sup>31</sup> golde,  
 Ne þe saynt,<sup>32</sup> ne þe sylk, ne þe syde <sup>33</sup> pendaundes,<sup>34</sup>  
 For wele,<sup>35</sup> ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk <sup>36</sup> werkkeȝ,  
 Bot in syngne of my surfet <sup>37</sup> I schal se hit ofte ;  
 When I ride in renoun, remorde <sup>38</sup> to myselven
- 25 þe faut and þe fayntyse <sup>39</sup> of þe flesche crabbed,<sup>40</sup>

<sup>1</sup> commend<sup>2</sup> comely<sup>3</sup> mate<sup>4</sup> stratagem<sup>5</sup> cunningly<sup>6</sup> wonder<sup>7</sup> grew mad<sup>8</sup> on earth<sup>9</sup> many different ones<sup>10</sup> moreover, likewise<sup>11</sup> Delilah<sup>12</sup> dealt<sup>13</sup> fate, doom<sup>14</sup> mingled, wedded<sup>15</sup> Bathsheba<sup>16</sup> grief<sup>17</sup> suffered<sup>18</sup> vexed<sup>19</sup> joy<sup>20</sup> believe<sup>21</sup> were a man but able<sup>22</sup> of old<sup>23</sup> noblest<sup>24</sup> beyond (excelling) all others<sup>25</sup> indulged their fancies (?)<sup>26</sup> beguiled<sup>27</sup> dealt with<sup>28</sup> it is fitting for me<sup>29</sup> requite<sup>30</sup> keep in possession<sup>31</sup> goodly (?)<sup>32</sup> samite<sup>33</sup> long<sup>34</sup> pendants<sup>35</sup> good fortune<sup>36</sup> beautiful<sup>37</sup> fault, sin<sup>38</sup> I shall blame<sup>39</sup> faintness, weakness<sup>40</sup> perverse (?)

How tender <sup>1</sup> hit is to entyse <sup>2</sup> teches <sup>3</sup> of fylpe <sup>4</sup>;  
 And þus, quen <sup>5</sup> pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,  
 þe loke to <sup>6</sup> þis luf <sup>7</sup> lace schal leþe <sup>8</sup> my hert.  
 Bot on <sup>9</sup> I wolde yow pray, displeases <sup>10</sup> yow never;  
 Syn <sup>11</sup> ze be lorde of the ȝonder londe, þer I haf lent <sup>12</sup> inne 5  
 Wyth yow wyth worschyp — þe Wyȝe <sup>13</sup> hit yow ȝelde  
 þat uphaldez þe heven, and on hyȝ <sup>14</sup> sittez! —  
 How norne <sup>15</sup> ze yowre ryȝt nome, and þenne no more? '  
 ' þat schal I telle þe trwly,' quoth þat oþer þenne,  
 ' Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat <sup>16</sup> in þis londe, 10  
 þurȝ myȝt of Morgne la Faye (þat in my hous lenges) <sup>17</sup>  
 And koyntyse <sup>18</sup> of clergie <sup>19</sup> bi craftes wel lerned,  
 þe maystres of Merlyn mony hatz <sup>20</sup> taken;  
 For ho hatz dalt drwry <sup>21</sup> ful dere sum tyme  
 With þat conable <sup>22</sup> klerk þat knowes alle your knyȝtez 15

At hame;

Morgne þe goddes,  
 þerfore hit is hir name;  
 Weldez <sup>23</sup> non so hyȝe hawtesse, <sup>24</sup>  
 þat ho ne con make ful tame. <sup>25</sup> 20

'Ho wayned <sup>26</sup> me upon þis wyse to your wynne <sup>27</sup> halle,  
 For to assay þe surquidre, <sup>28</sup> ȝif hit soth were,  
 þat rennes <sup>29</sup> of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table;  
 Ho wayned me, þis wonder, your wyttez to reve, <sup>30</sup>  
 For to haf greved Gaynour, <sup>31</sup> and gart hir to dyȝe, <sup>32</sup> 25  
 With gopnyng <sup>33</sup> of þat ilke gomen, <sup>34</sup> þat gostlych speked,  
 With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hyȝe table.

1 frail, weak  
 2 acquire, catch  
 3 spots, stains, blemishes  
 4 foulness, sin  
 5 when  
 6 at  
 7 dear, precious  
 8 soften  
 9 one thing  
 10 if it displease  
 11 since  
 12 dwelt

13 Being  
 14 high  
 15 say  
 16 am called  
 17 dwells  
 18 (her) cunning  
 19 learning  
 20 MS. ho  
 21 carried on amours  
 22 competent  
 23 possesses  
 24 dignity, power

25 submissive  
 26 sent  
 27 goodly (?)  
 28 pride  
 29 runs, is told  
 30 take away  
 31 Guinevere  
 32 die  
 33 fear  
 34 laughing-stock

- þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian<sup>1</sup> lady ;  
 Ho is even þyn aunt, Arpurez half suster,  
 þe duches dogter of Tyntagelle,<sup>2</sup> þat dere<sup>3</sup> Uter<sup>4</sup> after  
 Hade Arþur upon,<sup>5</sup> þat aþel<sup>6</sup> is nowþe.<sup>7</sup>  
 5 þerfore I eþe<sup>8</sup> þe, hapel, to com to þyn aunt,  
 Make myry in my hous, my meny þe lovies,  
 And I wol<sup>9</sup> þe as wel, wyge, bi my faythe,  
 As any gome under God, for þy grete trauþe.<sup>7</sup>  
 And he nikked hym naye,<sup>10</sup> he nolde bi no wayes.  
 10 þay acolen<sup>11</sup> and kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer<sup>12</sup>  
 To þe Prynce of Paradise, and parten rygt þere,  
 On coolde<sup>13</sup> ;  
 Gawayn on blonk<sup>14</sup> ful bene,  
 To þe kyngez burg<sup>15</sup> buskez<sup>16</sup> bolde,  
 15 And þe knygt in þe enker<sup>17</sup> grene,  
 Whiderwarde so ever he wolde.

## THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE

There was a Thomas Rimor (Rymour) of Ercelandune (modern Earlstoun) in the thirteenth century, a Scotchman who obtained in the following century the reputation of a prophet. He cannot, however, have been the author of our romance, which must have been composed after 1401, and is assigned by the *New English Dictionary* to about 1425. The romance consists of three cantos, of which the first is devoted to the fairy tale here following, and the second and third to prophecies, or what purport to be such. Child thought that the prophecies were by an inferior hand, but Murray believes the whole romance to have been the work of a single poet. Curiously enough, the story is told partly in the first person, and partly in the third.

A ballad, founded on the romance (see Murray's edition, pp. lii, liii), is No. 37 of Child's collection, of which the first stanza runs in one version :

True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,  
 And he beheld a ladie gay,  
 A ladie that was brisk and bold,  
 Come riding oer the fernie brae.

<sup>1</sup> ancient<sup>2</sup> the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel<sup>3</sup> noble<sup>4</sup> Uther<sup>5</sup> by<sup>6</sup> noble<sup>7</sup> now<sup>8</sup> ask, bid<sup>9</sup> wish<sup>10</sup> refused him<sup>11</sup> embrace<sup>12</sup> commend each the other<sup>13</sup> in the open (?)<sup>14</sup> steed (*lit.* white steed)<sup>15</sup> fortress<sup>16</sup> hastens<sup>17</sup> dark (inky) green



Thomas still retains his power over the imaginations of men. Professor Dixon, of the University of Glasgow, has written a little play, called *Thomas the Rhymer* (Glasgow, 1911), and Kipling's *Last Rhyme of True Thomas* (1893) is one of his most spirited poems.

The scene of the poem is best described by Sir James Murray (pp. 1, li of his edition): 'Eildon Tree, referred to in the Romance, and connected traditionally with Thomas's prophecies, stood on the declivity of the eastern of the three Eildon Hills. . . . Its site is believed to be indicated by the *Eildon Stone*, "a rugged boulder of whinstone" standing on the edge of the road from Melrose to St Boswell's, about a mile south-east from the former town, and on the ridge of a spur of the hill. "The view from this point," says a correspondent, "is unsurpassed; on the north you have the vale of Leader almost up to Earlston, and Cowdenknowes with its 'Black Hill' rising abruptly from the bed of the stream; while downward to Tweed the undulating expanse of woody bank is so beautiful, that in the time of the 'bonny broom,' I am often tempted to bend my steps to the spot, and 'lie and watch the sight,' from a spot once 'underneath the Eildon Tree.' In the close vicinity is the 'Bogle Burn,' a stream which rises on the slope of the Eastern Eildon, and flows down a deep glen into the Tweed a little to the north of Newtown St Boswell's." . . . About half a mile to the west of the Eildon Stone, and on the slope of the same hill, we find the "Huntlee bankis" of the old romance. The spot lies a little above the North British Railway, at the point where it is crossed by the road to St Boswell's already referred to, about a quarter of a mile after leaving Melrose Station. The field next the road and railway at this point (No. 2405 on the Ordnance Map) is called *Monks' Meadow*; and higher up the hill above this are two fields (Nos. 2548 and 2408) which have preserved the name of Huntlee Brae.'

The Ordnance map in question is that of the Parish of Melrose (May, 1861), Sheet VIII. 5. The road leaves the market-place, and leads to Oakendean House; it touches a corner of 2405 just after it crosses the railway and strikes a little southeast. No. 2408 is directly south of 2405, about 120 yards from the road, by way of a row of trees. No. 2548 is directly south of 2408, and about 150 yards further. Directly east of 2548 is Corse Rig (2410), with a plantation of trees.

Sir Walter Scott's enthusiasm for the story is best shown by a passage or two from Basil Hall's journal for Dec. 30, 1824, as quoted in Lockhart's life of Scott: 'This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. . . . Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which, though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly Burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rhymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that

by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant. . . . In the evening, . . . Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, . . . the famous poem on Thomas the Rhymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical—his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly Burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening.' On Scott's transfer of his supposititious 'Rhymer's Glen' to the Abbotsford estate, see Murray's edition, p. lii.

The complete romance exists in four manuscripts, of which the oldest and best, the Thornton MS. of Lincoln Cathedral, dates from 1430-1440. All were admirably edited by Dr. Murray in 1875 for the Early English Text Society (No. 61). Another edition, with a reconstructed text, is that by Professor Brandl (Berlin, 1880), with copious variants. The present text reposes upon the Thornton manuscript, as printed by Murray, but the spelling has been somewhat normalized, and an attempt has been made to eliminate certain manifest errors; this, therefore, is a restored text, and can not be depended upon for the exact manuscript readings. The editions of Murray and Brandl can be relied upon for detailed information upon all matters of interest.

Als I me <sup>1</sup> went þis endres <sup>2</sup> day,  
 Full fast in mynd makand my mone,  
 In a mery mornynge of May,  
 By Huntlee bankes myself allone,

5 I herd þe jay and þe þrostell <sup>3</sup>;  
 The mavys <sup>4</sup> menyde hir <sup>5</sup> in hir song;  
 Þe wodewale <sup>6</sup> beryde <sup>7</sup> als <sup>8</sup> a bell,  
 That all þe wode abowt me rong.

10 Allone in longyng als I lay,  
 Undyrneth a semely tree,  
 Saw I whare a lady gay  
 Came ridand over a lufly lee.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> by myself

<sup>2</sup> other

<sup>3</sup> throstle

<sup>4</sup> song-thrush

<sup>5</sup> bemoaned herself

<sup>6</sup> wood-lark (Murray); according to others, the yaffle, or green wood-pecker

<sup>7</sup> rang out

<sup>8</sup> as, like

<sup>9</sup> lea, meadow

If I solde sytt to Domesday,  
 With my tonge to wrobbe and wrye,<sup>1</sup>  
 Certanely þat lady gay  
 Never bese scho discryved <sup>2</sup> for mee.

Hir palfrey was a dappill-gray — 5  
 Swylk one ne sagh <sup>3</sup> I never none.  
 Als dose þe sonne on someres day,  
 Þat faire lady herself scho schone.

Hir selle <sup>4</sup> it was of roell bone <sup>5</sup> —  
 Semely was þat syght to see! — 10  
 Stefly sett with precyous stone,  
 And compast all with crapotee,<sup>6</sup> ?

With stones of Oryent, grete plente.  
 Hir hare abowt hir hede it hang.  
 Scho rade over þat lufly lee; 15  
 A <sup>7</sup> whyl scho blew, anoþer scho sang.

Hir garthes <sup>8</sup> of nobyll sylk þay were,  
 The bukylls were of berel <sup>9</sup> stone;  
 Hir steraps were of crystal clere,  
 And all with perel <sup>10</sup> over bygone.<sup>11</sup> 20

Hir payetrel <sup>12</sup> was of irale <sup>13</sup> fyne;  
 Hir cropour was of orphare <sup>14</sup>;  
 Hir brydill was of golde fyne —  
 Onę aythir syde hang <sup>15</sup> bellys three.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of these two verbs is very doubtful

<sup>2</sup> shall she be described

<sup>3</sup> saw

<sup>4</sup> saddle

<sup>5</sup> ivory (see *NED*, s.v. *ruel-bone*)

<sup>6</sup> toadstone (cf. Shakespeare, *A.Y.L.* 2. 1. 13)

<sup>7</sup> one

<sup>8</sup> girths

<sup>9</sup> beryl

<sup>10</sup> pearl

<sup>11</sup> covered

<sup>12</sup> horse's breastplate

<sup>13</sup> (?)

<sup>14</sup> orphrey, rich embroidery (esp. of gold)

<sup>15</sup> hung

Scho led thre grewehundis<sup>1</sup> in a lesse,<sup>2</sup>  
 And seven raches<sup>3</sup> by hir ron ;  
 Scho bare an horn abowt hir halse,<sup>4</sup>  
 And undir hir belt full many a flon.<sup>5</sup>

5 Thomas lay and saw þat syght,  
 Undirnethe ane semely tree.  
 He sayd : ' Ȝon<sup>6</sup> es Mary, most of myght,  
 þat bare þat Child þat dyede for mee.  
 ' Bot-if<sup>7</sup> I speke with ȝon lady bryght,  
 10 I hope<sup>8</sup> myn herte will bryst<sup>9</sup> in three ;  
 Now sall I go with all my myght,  
 Hir for to mete at Eldoun tree.'

Thomas rathely<sup>10</sup> up he rase,  
 And ran over þat mountayn hye ;  
 15 Gyff<sup>11</sup> it be als þe story says,  
 Hè hir mette at Eldon tree.

He knelyde down appon his knee,  
 Undirnethe þat grenwode spray :  
 ' Luffly lady, rewe<sup>12</sup> on me,  
 20 Qwene of heven, als<sup>13</sup> þou wel may !'

Than spake þat lady milde of thoght :  
 ' Thomas, late swylke wordes be !  
 Qwene of heven ne am I noght,  
 For I tuke<sup>14</sup> never so hegh degre ;

25 Bote I am of anoper countree,  
 If<sup>15</sup> I be payreld<sup>16</sup> most of pryse.<sup>17</sup>  
 I ryde aftyr this wylde fee<sup>18</sup> ;  
 My raches rynnys at my devyse.<sup>19</sup>'

<sup>1</sup> greyhounds<sup>2</sup> leash<sup>3</sup> hunting-dogs (hounds that follow by the scent, as the greyhound does by sight ; so Murray)<sup>4</sup> neck<sup>5</sup> arrow<sup>6</sup> yon<sup>7</sup> unless<sup>8</sup> believe<sup>9</sup> burst<sup>10</sup> quickly<sup>11</sup> if<sup>12</sup> have pity<sup>13</sup> as<sup>14</sup> took<sup>15</sup> even though<sup>16</sup> appareled<sup>17</sup> price<sup>18</sup> game, animals<sup>19</sup> command, will

' If þou be pareld most of pryse,  
 And rydis here in thy foly,  
 Of lufe, lady, als þou erte wyse,<sup>1</sup>  
 þou gyffe me leve to lye the by !'

Scho sayde : ' þou man, þat ware foly. 5  
 I praye þe, Thomas, late me bee ;  
 For I saye þe full sekirly,<sup>2</sup>  
 þat synn wolde fordoo <sup>3</sup> all my beaute.'

' Lufly lady, rewe on mee,  
 And I will evermore with the duelle ; 10  
 Here my trouth I plyght to the,  
 Whethir þou will in heven or helle.'

' Man of molde, þou will me merre,<sup>4</sup>  
 Bot git þou sall hafe all thy will ;  
 Bot trowe þou wele, þou chevys <sup>5</sup> þe werre,<sup>6</sup> 15  
 For alle my beaute þou will spyll.'

Down þan lyghte þat lady bryght,  
 Undirnethe þat grenewode spray ;  
 And, als þe story tellis full ryght,  
 Seven sythis <sup>7</sup> by hir he lay. 20

Scho sayd : ' Man, the lykes thy play ;  
 What byrd <sup>8</sup> in boure <sup>9</sup> may dele <sup>10</sup> with the ?  
 Thou merrys me all þis longe day ;  
 I pray the, Thomas, late me bee !'

Thomas stod up in þat stede,<sup>11</sup> 25  
 And he byheld þat lady gay :  
 Hir hare it hang all over hir hede,  
 Hir eghne semede out, þat were so gray,

<sup>1</sup> wise (Murray says that *wise* and *pryse*  
 are pronounced as if *wice* and *price*)

<sup>2</sup> surely

<sup>3</sup> destroy

<sup>4</sup> mar

<sup>5</sup> succeedest, thrives

<sup>6</sup> worse

<sup>7</sup> times

<sup>8</sup> woman

<sup>9</sup> bower

<sup>10</sup> deal

<sup>11</sup> stead, place

And all the rich cloþyng was away,  
 þat he byfore saw in þat stede;  
 Hir a <sup>1</sup> schanke <sup>2</sup> blake, hir oþer gray,  
 And all hir body lyke þe lede.<sup>3</sup>

5 þan said Thomas: 'Allas, allas!  
 In fayth, þis es a dullfull <sup>4</sup> syght!  
 How art þou fadyd in þe face,  
 þat schan byfore als þe sonne so bryght!'

Sche sayd: 'Thomas, take leve at sonne and mone,  
 10 And als <sup>5</sup> at lefe þat grewes on tree;  
 This twelmonth sall þou with me gone,<sup>6</sup>  
 And medill-erthe<sup>7</sup> sall þou not see.'

'Allas,' he sayd, 'and wa es mee!  
 I trowe my dedis wyll wirk me care.  
 15 My saule, Jesu, byteche <sup>8</sup> I the,  
 Whedirsomever my banes sall fare.'

Scho ledde hym in at Eldone Hill,  
 Undirnethe a derne<sup>9</sup> lee,  
 20 Whare it was dirk als mydnyght myrk,<sup>10</sup>  
 And ever þe water till his knee.

The montenans <sup>11</sup> of dayes three,  
 He herd bot swoghyng <sup>12</sup> of þe flode;  
 At þe laste he sayd: 'Full wa <sup>13</sup> es mee!  
 Almast I dye for fawte <sup>14</sup> of fode.'

<sup>1</sup> one<sup>2</sup> leg<sup>3</sup> lead<sup>4</sup> doleful<sup>5</sup> also<sup>6</sup> go<sup>7</sup> middle earth<sup>8</sup> commit<sup>9</sup> secret<sup>10</sup> murk, murky<sup>11</sup> amount, period<sup>12</sup> roaring<sup>13</sup> woe<sup>14</sup> lack

9. Sche sayd. These two words are perhaps extra-metrical, and not to be read.

Scho lede hym intill a faire herbere,<sup>1</sup>  
 Whare frute was growand gret plentee ;  
 Pere and appill both rype þay were,  
 The date, and als the damasee<sup>2</sup> ;

þe fygge, and also þe wyneberye<sup>3</sup> ; 5  
 The nyghtgales byggande<sup>4</sup> on þair nest,  
 þe papejoyes<sup>5</sup> fast abowt gan<sup>6</sup> flye,  
 And throstylls sang — wolde hafe no rest.

He pressede to pull frute with his hand,  
 Als man<sup>7</sup> for fude<sup>8</sup> þat was nere faynt. 10  
 Scho sayd : ' Thomas, pou late þam stand,  
Or ells þe fende the will atteynt.

If pou it plok, sothely to say,  
 Thi saule gose to þe fyr of helle ;  
 It commes never owte or<sup>9</sup> Domesday, 15  
 Bot þer in payne ay for to duelle.

Thomas, sothely I the hyght<sup>10</sup> :  
 Come lygg thyn hede down on my knee,  
 And pou sall se þe fayrest syght  
 þat ever saw man of thi contree.' 20

He did in hye<sup>11</sup> als scho hym badde :  
 Appon hir knee his hede he layd,  
 For hir to paye<sup>12</sup> he was full glade ;  
 And þan þat lady to him sayd :

' Seese pou now gon faire way, 25  
 þat lygges over gon hegh mountayn ?  
þone es þe waye to heven for ay, | .  
 When synfull sawles are passede þer payn.

<sup>1</sup> garden, orchard<sup>2</sup> damson<sup>3</sup> grape<sup>4</sup> dwelling<sup>5</sup> parrots<sup>6</sup> did<sup>7</sup> a man<sup>8</sup> food<sup>9</sup> ere<sup>10</sup> bid<sup>11</sup> haste<sup>12</sup> please

Seese þou now ȝon oþer way,  
 þat lygges lawe<sup>1</sup> bynethe ȝon ryse<sup>2</sup>?

Ȝon es þe way, þe sothe to say,

2. Unto þe joye of Paradyse.

5 Seese þou gitt ȝon thirde way,  
 þat ligges undir ȝon grene playn?

Ȝone es þe way, with tene<sup>3</sup> and tray<sup>4</sup>

3. Whare synfull saulis suffirris þair payn.

10 Bot seese þou now ȝone ferthe way,  
 þat lygges over ȝon depe delle?

4. Ȝone es þe way — so waylaway! —

Unto þe birnand fyr of helle.

Seese þou gitt ȝone faire castell,  
 þat standis over ȝon heghe hill?  
 15 Of towne and towre it beris þe bell<sup>5</sup>;  
 In erthe es none lyke þertill.

Forsothe, Thomas, ȝone es myn awen  
 And þe kynges<sup>6</sup> of this countree;  
 Bot me ware lever<sup>7</sup> be hanged and drawen,  
 20 Or<sup>8</sup> þat he wyste þou laye by me.

When þou commes to ȝone castell gay,  
 I pray þe curtase man to bee;  
 And whatso any man to þe say,  
 Luke þou answeere none bot mee.

25 My lorde es servede at ylk<sup>9</sup> a messe<sup>10</sup>  
 With thritty knyghtis faire and free;  
 I sall say, syttand at the desse,<sup>11</sup>  
 I take thi speche bygonde the see.'

<sup>1</sup> low

<sup>2</sup> spray

<sup>3</sup> grief

<sup>4</sup> affliction

<sup>5</sup> excels

<sup>6</sup> king's

<sup>7</sup> I had rather

<sup>8</sup> ere

<sup>9</sup> each

<sup>10</sup> course

<sup>11</sup> dais



Thomas still als stane he stude,  
 And byheld þat lady gay ;  
 Scho was agayn als <sup>1</sup> faire and gude,  
 And also <sup>1</sup> ryche on hir palfray ;  
  
 Hir grewehundis fillide <sup>2</sup> with dere blode, 5  
 Hir raches couplede, by my fay <sup>3</sup> ;  
 Scho blew hir horn with mayn <sup>4</sup> and mode, <sup>5</sup>  
 And to þe castell scho tuke þe way.  
  
 Into þe hall sothely scho went ;  
 Thomas foloued at hir hand. 10  
 Than ladyes come, both faire and gent, <sup>6</sup>  
 With curtasye to hir kneland.  
  
 Harpe and fethill <sup>7</sup> both þay fand,  
 þe getern, <sup>8</sup> and also þe sawtrye, <sup>9</sup>  
 Lute and rybye <sup>10</sup> bothe gangand, 15  
 And all manere of mynstralsye.  
  
 þe moste mervelle þat Thomas thoghte  
 When þat he stode appon þe flore —  
 Fefty hertis in were broghte,  
 þat were bothe grete and store. <sup>11</sup> 20  
  
 Raches lay lapand in þe blode ;  
 Cokes come with dryssyng-knyfe <sup>12</sup> ;  
 Thay bryttened <sup>13</sup> þe dere als <sup>14</sup> þey were wode <sup>15</sup> ;  
 Revell amanges þam was full ryfe.  
  
 Knyghtis dawnsede by three and three ; 25  
 There was revell, gamen, and playe ;  
 Luffly ladyes faire and free  
 Satt and sang in riche araye.

<sup>1</sup> as  
<sup>2</sup> (were) filled  
<sup>3</sup> faith  
<sup>4</sup> might  
<sup>5</sup> spirit

<sup>6</sup> well bred  
<sup>7</sup> fiddle  
<sup>8</sup> gittern (a kind of guitar)  
<sup>9</sup> psaltery (a kind of zither)  
<sup>10</sup> rebeck (a three-stringed fiddle)

<sup>11</sup> mighty  
<sup>12</sup> dressing-knife  
<sup>13</sup> cut up  
<sup>14</sup> as if  
<sup>15</sup> mad

Thomas duellide in that solace  
 More <sup>1</sup> þan I ȝow saye, parde,<sup>2</sup>  
 Till on a day — so hafe I grace ! —  
 My lufly lady sayd to mee :

5        ' Buske <sup>3</sup> the, Thomas, þe buse <sup>4</sup> agayn,  
           For here þou may no lengar be ;  
 Hye <sup>5</sup> the faste with myght and mayn ;  
           I sall the bryng till Eldone tree.'

10       Thomas sayd þan with hevy chere :  
           ' Lufly lady, now late me bee,  
 For certaynly I hafe bene here  
           Noght bot þe space of dayes three.'

15       ' Forsothe, Thomas, als I þe tell,  
           þou hase bene here thre ȝere and more,  
 And langer here þou may noght duell ;  
           The skyll <sup>6</sup> I sall þe tell wharefore :

20       To-morne of helle þe foule fende  
           Amang this folk will feche his fee ;  
 And þou art mekill <sup>7</sup> man and hende <sup>8</sup> —  
           I trow full wele he wil chese <sup>9</sup> the.

For all þe gold þat ever may bee  
           Fro hethyn <sup>10</sup> unto þe worldis ende,  
 þou bese <sup>11</sup> never betrayed for mee ;  
           þerefore with me I rede <sup>12</sup> thou wende.'

25       Scho broght hym agayn to Eldone tree,  
           Undirnethe þat grenewode spray. —  
 In Huntlee bankes es mery to bee,  
           Whare fowles synges both nyght and day.

<sup>1</sup> longer  
<sup>2</sup> in truth (*Fr. par Dieu*)  
<sup>3</sup> prepare  
<sup>4</sup> behooves (to return)

<sup>5</sup> haste  
<sup>6</sup> reason  
<sup>7</sup> large, robust  
<sup>8</sup> courtly

<sup>9</sup> choose  
<sup>10</sup> hence  
<sup>11</sup> shalt be  
<sup>12</sup> advise

## AMIS AND AMILOUN

*Amis and Amiloun* (late thirteenth century) is ultimately derived from a Greek or Oriental source. The story represents the mediæval notion of an ideal friendship, capable of attaining supreme heights of devotion. Amiloun risks his life to save the honor of Amis by maintaining his friend's perjured word in a trial by combat, and afterwards suffers for his generosity by becoming a leper. As an outcast and beggar, with only one young page as companion, he is at length recognized by Amis, and lovingly cared for and comforted. When an angel declares to Amis in a dream that only by means of the blood of his two children can Amiloun be cured, he meets even this demand upon his friendship and gratitude. Then a miracle takes place. Each friend has done what the other's need called for, and their sins are now fully atoned for by self-sacrifice. The two slaughtered children are found alive, happily playing together, and the story ends in cheer.

There are versions in Old French, Latin, Old Norse, and Celtic. The English romance is closely related to an Anglo-Norman poem printed by Kölbing, who has elaborately edited the English text (*Altenglische Bibliothek*, Vol. 2, Heilbronn, 1884), closely following the Auchinleck manuscript. The language is Northeast Midland. For a good outline, see Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 250-2.

Our extract covers lines 2245-2424.

þan pougt þe douk,<sup>1</sup> wipouten lesing,<sup>2</sup>  
 For to slen<sup>3</sup> his childer so ging<sup>4</sup>  
 It were a dedli sinne;  
 And þan pougt he, bi heven<sup>5</sup> King,  
 His broper out of sorwe bring,<sup>6</sup> 5  
 For þat nold he nougt blinne.<sup>7</sup>  
 So it bifel on Cristes nigt,  
 Swiche time as Jesu, ful of migt,  
 Was born to save mankinne,<sup>8</sup>  
 To chirche to wende, al þat per wes,<sup>9</sup> 10  
 þai digten<sup>10</sup> hem, wipouten les,<sup>11</sup>  
 Wiþ joie and worldes winne.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> duke

<sup>2</sup> deception

<sup>3</sup> slay

<sup>4</sup> young

<sup>5</sup> heaven's

<sup>6</sup> to bring

<sup>7</sup> to that end would he not cease  
(his endeavors)

<sup>8</sup> MS. -kunne

<sup>9</sup> who were there

<sup>10</sup> prepared

<sup>11</sup> to tell the truth

<sup>12</sup> delight

- 5 þan<sup>1</sup> þai were redi for to fare,<sup>2</sup>  
 þe douke bad al þat þer ware,  
 To chirche þai schuld wende,  
 Litel and michel, lasse and mare,<sup>3</sup>  
 þat non bileft<sup>4</sup> in chaumber are,<sup>6</sup>  
 As þai wald<sup>6</sup> ben his frende<sup>7</sup>;  
 And seyð he wald himselve þat niȝt  
 Kepe<sup>8</sup> his broþer, þat gentil kniȝt,  
 þat was so god and kende.<sup>9</sup>  
 10 þan was þer non þat durst say nay:  
 To chirche þai went in her<sup>10</sup> way,  
 At hom bileft þe<sup>11</sup> hende.<sup>12</sup>

a  
 a  
 f  
 a  
 a  
 L  
 C  
 b  
 d  
 d  
 b

- 15 þe douke wel<sup>18</sup> fast gan asprie<sup>14</sup>  
 þe kays of þe noricerie,<sup>15</sup>  
 Erþan<sup>16</sup> þai schuld gon;  
 And priueliche<sup>17</sup> he cast his eize,<sup>18</sup>  
 And aparceived ful witterlye<sup>19</sup>  
 Where þat þai hadde hem don.<sup>20</sup>  
 And wþen þai were to chirche went,<sup>21</sup>  
 20 þan Sir Amis, verrament,<sup>22</sup>  
 Was bileft al on.<sup>23</sup>  
 He tok a candel fair and briȝt,  
 And to þe kays he went ful riȝt,  
 And tok hem oway ichon.<sup>24</sup>

- 25 Alon himself, wiþouten mo,<sup>25</sup>  
 Into þe chaumber he gan to go,  
 þer þat his childer were,

1 when  
 2 go  
 3 greater  
 4 left  
 5 should be; MS. þare  
 6 would  
 7 friends  
 8 watch over  
 9 kind

10 their  
 11 MS. þo  
 12 they left the noble one  
 13 very  
 14 began to look for  
 15 nursery  
 16 before  
 17 secretly  
 18 eye

19 clearly  
 20 put them  
 21 gone  
 22 truly  
 23 alone  
 24 each one  
 25 more, others

And biheld hem boþe to,<sup>1</sup>  
 Hou fair þái lay togider þo,  
 And slepe boþe yfere<sup>2</sup>;  
 Þan seyð himselve: ' Bi Seyn Jon,  
 It were gret reweþe<sup>3</sup> gou to slon, 5  
 Þat God haþ bougt so dere!'  
 His kniif he had drawen þat tide<sup>4</sup>;  
 For sorwe he sleynt<sup>5</sup> oway biside,  
 And wepe wiþ reweful<sup>6</sup> chere.<sup>7</sup>

Þan he hadde wopen<sup>8</sup> þer he stode, 10  
 Anon he turned oðain his mode,<sup>9</sup>  
 And sayð wiþouten delay:  
 ' Mi broþer was so kinde and gode,  
 Wiþ grimly<sup>10</sup> wounde he schad<sup>11</sup> his blod  
 For mi love oþon a day; 15  
 Whi schuld Y þan mi childer spare,  
 To bring mi broþer out of care?  
 O, certes,<sup>12</sup> he sayð, ' nay!  
 To help mi broþer now at þis nede,  
 God graunt me þer to wele<sup>13</sup> to spede,<sup>14</sup> 20  
 And Mari, þat best may<sup>15</sup>!'

No lenger stint<sup>16</sup> he no stode,<sup>17</sup>  
 Bot hent<sup>18</sup> his kniif wiþ dreri mode,  
 And tok his children þo;  
 For he nold nougt spille her<sup>19</sup> blode, 25  
 Over a bacine<sup>20</sup> fair and gode  
 Her<sup>19</sup> protes he schar<sup>21</sup> atuo.<sup>22</sup>

*in two  
not three*

<sup>1</sup> both two, both  
<sup>2</sup> together  
<sup>3</sup> pity  
<sup>4</sup> time  
<sup>5</sup> slunk  
<sup>6</sup> pitiful  
<sup>7</sup> countenance  
<sup>8</sup> wept

<sup>9</sup> changed his mind again  
<sup>10</sup> fearful  
<sup>11</sup> shed  
<sup>12</sup> truly  
<sup>13</sup> well-being  
<sup>14</sup> advance  
<sup>15</sup> can (help)  
<sup>16</sup> forbore

<sup>17</sup> nor stood still  
<sup>18</sup> seized  
<sup>19</sup> their  
<sup>20</sup> basin (OF. *basin*)  
<sup>21</sup> shore, cut  
<sup>22</sup> in two, asunder

And when he hadde hem boþe slain,  
He laid hem in her bed ogain,

— No wonder þei<sup>1</sup> him wer<sup>2</sup> wo! —

And hilde<sup>3</sup> hem, þat no wigt<sup>4</sup> schuld se;  
As no man hadde at<sup>5</sup> hem be,<sup>6</sup>

Out of chaumber he gan go.

And when he was out of chaumber gon,  
þe dore he steked<sup>7</sup> stille anon

As fast as it was biforn;

þe kays he hidde under a ston,  
And pougt þai schuld wene<sup>8</sup> ichon

þat þai hadde ben forlorn.<sup>9</sup>

To his broþer he went him þan,

And seyð to þat careful<sup>10</sup> man,

Swiche time as God was born:

'Ich have þe brougt mi childer<sup>11</sup> blod;

Ich hope it schal do þe gode,

As þe angel seyð biforn.'

'Broþer,' Sir Amiloun gan to say,

'Hastow<sup>12</sup> slayn pine children tuay<sup>13</sup>?

Allas, whi de[de]stow<sup>14</sup> so?'

He wepe and seyð: 'Waileway!

Ich had lever<sup>15</sup> til Domesday<sup>16</sup>

Have lived in care and wo!'

þan seyð Sir Amis: 'Be now stille;

Jesu, when it is his wille,

May sende me childer mo.<sup>17</sup>

For me<sup>18</sup> of blis þou art al bare<sup>19</sup>;

Ywis, mi liif wil Y nougt spare

To help þe now þerfro.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> though, if

<sup>2</sup> were

<sup>3</sup> concealed

<sup>4</sup> nobody

<sup>5</sup> with

<sup>6</sup> been

<sup>7</sup> fastened

<sup>8</sup> suppose

<sup>9</sup> lost

<sup>10</sup> full of care, sad

<sup>11</sup> children's

<sup>12</sup> hast thou

<sup>13</sup> two

<sup>14</sup> didst thou

<sup>15</sup> rather

<sup>16</sup> Doomsday

<sup>17</sup> more

<sup>18</sup> on my account

<sup>19</sup> deprived of

<sup>20</sup> out of thy condition

He tok þat blode, þat was so brigȝt,  
 And alied <sup>1</sup> þat gentil knigt,  
     þat er <sup>2</sup> was hende <sup>3</sup> in hale <sup>4</sup> ;  
 And seppen <sup>5</sup> in a bed him digt,<sup>6</sup>  
 And wreige <sup>7</sup> him wel warm, apligt,<sup>8</sup> 5  
     Wip cloþes riche and fale.<sup>9</sup>  
 ' Broþer,' he seyde, ' ly now stille,  
 And falle on slepe purch Godes wille,  
     As þe angel told in tale <sup>10</sup> ;  
 And Ich hope wele, wipouten lesing, 10  
 Jesu, þat is heven King,  
     Schal bote <sup>11</sup> þe of þi bale.<sup>12</sup> '

Sir Amis lete <sup>13</sup> him ly <sup>14</sup> alon,  
 And into his chapel he went anon,  
     In gest <sup>15</sup> as ȝe may here ; 15  
 And for his childer þat he hadde slon  
 To God of heven he made his mon,<sup>16</sup>  
     And preyde wip rewely <sup>17</sup> chere  
 [He] schuld save him fram schame þat day,  
 And Mari, his moder, þat best may, 20  
     þat was him leve <sup>18</sup> and dere.  
 And Jesu Crist, in þat stede,<sup>19</sup>  
 Ful wele he herd þat knigtes bede,<sup>20</sup>  
     And graunt <sup>21</sup> him his praiere.

A morwe,<sup>22</sup> as tite <sup>23</sup> as it was day, 25  
 Þe levedi com hom, al wip play,<sup>24</sup>  
     Wip knigtes ten and five.

<sup>1</sup> anointed  
<sup>2</sup> formerly  
<sup>3</sup> courteous  
<sup>4</sup> hall  
<sup>5</sup> afterwards  
<sup>6</sup> arranged  
<sup>7</sup> covered  
<sup>8</sup> in truth

<sup>9</sup> many  
<sup>10</sup> his message  
<sup>11</sup> cure  
<sup>12</sup> suffering  
<sup>13</sup> left  
<sup>14</sup> to lie, lying  
<sup>15</sup> the story  
<sup>16</sup> moan

<sup>17</sup> piteous  
<sup>18</sup> dear, precious  
<sup>19</sup> in that situation  
<sup>20</sup> prayer  
<sup>21</sup> granted  
<sup>22</sup> on the morrow  
<sup>23</sup> soon  
<sup>24</sup> in merry mood

- þai sougt þe kays þer <sup>1</sup> þai lay ;  
 þai founde hem nougt — þai were oway ;  
 Wel wo was hem o live. <sup>2</sup>  
 þe douk bad al þat þer wes  
 5 þai schuld hold hem stille in pes, <sup>3</sup>  
 And stint <sup>4</sup> of her strive <sup>5</sup> ;  
 And seyð he hadde þe keys nome <sup>6</sup> ;  
 Schuld no man in þe chaumber come  
 Bot himself and his wive. <sup>7</sup>
- 10 Anon he tok his levedi þan,  
 And seyð to hir : ‘ Leve leman,  
 Be blipe and glad of mode ;  
 For, bi him þat þis warld wan, <sup>8</sup>  
 Boþe mi childer Ich have slan, <sup>9</sup>  
 15 þat were so hende <sup>10</sup> and gode ;  
 For me þougt in mi sweven <sup>11</sup>  
 þat an angel com fram heven,  
 And seyð me, purch her blode <sup>12</sup>  
 Mi broþer schuld passe out of his wo ;  
 20 þerfore Y slouȝ hem boþe to,  
 To hele þat frely fode. <sup>13</sup>
- þan was þe levedi ferly wo, <sup>14</sup>  
 And seige <sup>15</sup> hir lord was al so ;  
 Sche comfort <sup>16</sup> him ful ȝare. <sup>17</sup>  
 25 ‘ O lef <sup>18</sup> liif,’ sche seyð þo,  
 ‘ God may sende ous <sup>19</sup> childer mo,  
 Of hem have þou no care ;  
 Ȝif it ware at min hert rote, <sup>20</sup>  
 For to bring þi broþer bote <sup>21</sup>  
 30 My lyf Y wold not spare.
- |  |                                       |                               |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> where                             | <sup>8</sup> won                      | <sup>15</sup> saw             |
| <sup>2</sup> woeful, indeed, were they in life | <sup>9</sup> slain                    | <sup>16</sup> comforted       |
| <sup>3</sup> peace                             | <sup>10</sup> gentle                  | <sup>17</sup> readily, soon   |
| <sup>4</sup> cease                             | <sup>11</sup> dream                   | <sup>18</sup> dear            |
| <sup>5</sup> effort                            | <sup>12</sup> by means of their blood | <sup>19</sup> us              |
| <sup>6</sup> taken                             | <sup>13</sup> noble man               | <sup>20</sup> my heart's root |
| <sup>7</sup> wife                              | <sup>14</sup> exceedingly sorrowful   | <sup>21</sup> remedy          |



For no man shal oure children see,  
 To-morow shal þey beryed be  
 Rigt as þey faire <sup>1</sup> ded ware.'

Al þus þe lady faire and brygt  
 Comfort hur lord with al hur mygt, 5  
 As ȝe mow <sup>2</sup> understonde ;  
 And seth <sup>3</sup> þey went boþ ful rygt  
 To Sir Amylion, þat gentyl knygt,  
 Þat ere <sup>4</sup> was free <sup>5</sup> to fonde. <sup>6</sup>  
 And whan Sir Amylion wakyd þoo, 10  
 Al his fowlehed <sup>7</sup> was agoo, <sup>8</sup>  
 Þurch grace of Goddes sonde <sup>9</sup> ;  
 And þan was he as feire a man  
 As ever he was ȝet or þan, <sup>10</sup>  
 Sep he was born in londe. 15

Þan were þey al bliþ :  
 Her <sup>11</sup> joy couþ no man kyth, <sup>12</sup>  
 And þonked God þat day.  
 And þan, as ȝe mow listen and lyth, <sup>13</sup>  
 To a chamber þey went swyþ, <sup>14</sup> 20  
 Þere þe children lay ;  
 And, without wemme <sup>15</sup> and wound,  
 Al hool <sup>16</sup> and sound þe children found,  
 And layen togeder and play.  
 For joye þey wept þere þey stood, 25  
 And þonked God with myld mood ;  
 Her care was al away.

<sup>1</sup> naturally<sup>2</sup> must<sup>3</sup> afterwards<sup>4</sup> formerly, before<sup>5</sup> noble<sup>6</sup> to make trial of ; in trial<sup>7</sup> disease<sup>8</sup> gone<sup>9</sup> messenger<sup>10</sup> formerly or then<sup>11</sup> their<sup>12</sup> declare<sup>13</sup> hearken<sup>14</sup> quickly<sup>15</sup> blemish<sup>16</sup> whole

## SIR ORFEO

*Sir Orfeo* (about 1320) is a classical fable metamorphosed into a fairy tale, told in the manner of a Breton lay. Orpheus, like the banished Duke in *As You Like It*, resorts to the fields and woods for a season, after Eurydice is borne away; but she is restored to him, he regains his kingdom, and they live long afterwards. Ker says of the lay (*English Literature: Medieval*, p. 127; see also *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 328): 'One may refer to it as a standard, to show what can be done in the mediæval art of narrative, with the simplest elements and smallest amount of decoration. It is minstrel poetry, popular poetry — the point is clear when King Orfeo excuses himself to the King of Faerie by the rules of his profession as a minstrel; that was intended to produce a smile, and applause perhaps, among the audience. But though a minstrel's poem, it is far from rude, and it is quite free from the ordinary faults of rambling and prosing, such as Chaucer ridiculed in his *Geste of Sir Thopas*. It is all in good compass, and coherent; nothing in it is meaningless or ill-placed.'

A ballad on the theme is No. 19 of Child's collection.

Our text follows Zielke's print (Breslau, 1880) of the Auchinleck manuscript (with lines 1-24, 33-46 supplied from Harl. MS. 3810), but the punctuation has been freely altered. Occasional variations from Zielke's readings are noted.

We redyn<sup>1</sup> ofte and fynde ywryte,<sup>2</sup>  
 As clerkes don us to wyte,<sup>3</sup>  
 Þe layes þat ben of harpyng  
 Ben yfounde<sup>4</sup> of frely [ferly?] þing.<sup>6</sup>  
 5 Sum ben of wele, and sum of wo,  
 And sum of joy and merþe also,  
 Sum of trechery, and sum of gyle,  
 And sum of happes<sup>6</sup> þat fallen by whyle<sup>7</sup>;  
 Sum of bourdys,<sup>8</sup> and sum of rybaudry,  
 10 And sum þer ben of þe feyrye.<sup>9</sup>  
 Off alle þing þat men may se,  
 Moost o love<sup>10</sup> forsoþe þey be.  
 In Brytain pis<sup>11</sup> layes arne<sup>12</sup> ywryte,  
 Furst yfounde and forþe ygete,<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> read

<sup>2</sup> written

<sup>3</sup> make us to know

<sup>4</sup> composed

<sup>5</sup> of noble matters

<sup>6</sup> events

<sup>7</sup> happen at times

<sup>8</sup> mirth, jests

<sup>9</sup> magic, enchantment

<sup>10</sup> MS. lowe

<sup>11</sup> these

<sup>12</sup> are

<sup>18</sup> conceived

Of adventures þat fillen <sup>1</sup> by dayes,<sup>2</sup>  
 Wherof Brytouns made her layes.  
 When þey myght owher <sup>3</sup> heryn  
 Of adventures þat þer weryn,  
 Þey toke her harpys wiþ game,<sup>4</sup> 5  
 Maden layes, and gaf it <sup>5</sup> name.

Of adventures þat han befallē  
 Y can sum telle, but nought alle.<sup>6</sup>  
 Herken, lordyngs þat ben trewe,  
 And Y wol gou telle of sir Orphewe. 10

Orfeo was a king,  
 In his time an heize lording,  
 A stalworþ man and hardi bo,<sup>7</sup>  
 Large,<sup>8</sup> curteys he was also.  
 His fader was comen of King Pluto, 15  
 And his moder of King Juno,  
 Þat sum time were as godes yhold,  
 For aventours þat þai dede and told.

Orpheo most of ony þing  
 Lovede þe gle of harpyng; 20  
 Syker <sup>9</sup> was every gode harpoure<sup>10</sup>  
 Of hym to have moche honour.  
 Hymself loved for to harpe,  
 And layde þereon his wittes scharpe.<sup>11</sup>  
 He lernyd so, þer noþing was 25  
 A better harper in no plas.

In þe world was never man born  
 Þat ever Orpheo sat biforn,  
 And <sup>12</sup> he myȝt of his harpyng her,  
 He schulde pinke þat he wer 30  
 In one of þe joys of Paradys,  
 Suche joy and melody in his harpyng is.

<sup>1</sup> fell  
<sup>2</sup> once on a time  
<sup>3</sup> anywhere  
<sup>4</sup> joy, delight

<sup>5</sup> them  
<sup>6</sup> MS. all  
<sup>7</sup> both  
<sup>8</sup> generous

<sup>9</sup> sure  
<sup>10</sup> MS. harpoure  
<sup>11</sup> and gave his keen mind to the matter  
<sup>12</sup> if

- Þis king sojurnd in Traciens,<sup>1</sup>  
 Þat was a cite of noble defens ;  
 He hadde wiþ him a quen of priis,<sup>2</sup>  
 Þat was ycleped Dame Heurodis —  
 5 þe fairest levedi, for þe nones,<sup>3</sup>  
 Þat miȝt gon on bodi and bones,  
 Ful of love and of godenisse,  
 Ac<sup>4</sup> no man may telle hir fairnise.  
 Bifel so in þe comessing<sup>5</sup> of May,  
 10 When miri and hot is þe day,  
 Oway beþ winter-schours,  
 And everi feld is ful of flours,  
 And blosme breme<sup>6</sup> on everi bouȝ  
 Overal<sup>7</sup> wexep<sup>8</sup> miri anouȝ,<sup>9</sup>  
 15 Þis ich<sup>10</sup> quen, Dame Heurodis,  
 Tok to<sup>11</sup> maidens of priis,  
 And went in an undrentide<sup>12</sup>  
 To play bi an orchard-side,  
 To se þe floures sprede and spring,  
 20 And to here þe foules<sup>13</sup> sing.  
 Þai sett hem down al þre  
 Under a fair ympe-tre,<sup>14</sup>  
 And wel sone þis fair quene  
 Fel on slepe<sup>15</sup> opon þe grene.  
 25 Þe maidens durst hir nouȝt awake,  
 Bot lete hir ligge<sup>16</sup> and rest take ;  
 So sche slepe til afternone,  
 Þat under[n]tide was al ydone.  
 Ac so sone as sche gan awake,  
 30 Sche crid and lopli bere<sup>17</sup> gan make :  
 Sche froted<sup>18</sup> hir honden and hir fet,

<sup>1</sup> Thrace (*lit.* Thracians)

<sup>2</sup> renown

<sup>3</sup> at that time

<sup>4</sup> but

<sup>5</sup> beginning

<sup>6</sup> bright

<sup>7</sup> everywhere

<sup>8</sup> grow

<sup>9</sup> enough

<sup>10</sup> same

<sup>11</sup> two

<sup>12</sup> morning

<sup>13</sup> birds

<sup>14</sup> grafted tree

<sup>15</sup> asleep

<sup>16</sup> lie

<sup>17</sup> displeasing behavior

<sup>18</sup> rubbed, wrung

And crached <sup>1</sup> hir visage, it bled wete;  
 Hir riche robe sche <sup>2</sup> al torett,<sup>3</sup>  
 And was ravysed <sup>4</sup> out of hir witt.  
 Þe two <sup>5</sup> maidens hir biside  
 No durst wiþ hir no leng<sup>6</sup> abide, 5  
 Bot ourn <sup>7</sup> to þe palays ful riȝt,  
 And told boþe squier and kniȝt  
 Þat her quen awede <sup>8</sup> wold,  
 And bad hem go and hir athold.<sup>9</sup>  
 Kniȝtes urn,<sup>7</sup> and levedis also, 10  
 Damisels sexti and mo;  
 In þe orchard to þe quen hye <sup>10</sup> come,  
 And her up in her <sup>11</sup> armes nome,<sup>12</sup>  
 And brouȝt hir to bed atte <sup>13</sup> last,  
 And held hir þere fine <sup>14</sup> fast. 15  
 Ac ever sche held <sup>15</sup> in o <sup>16</sup> cri,  
 And wold up and owy.<sup>17</sup>  
 When Orfeo herd þat tiding,  
 Never him nas <sup>18</sup> wers for <sup>19</sup> noþing;  
 He come up wiþ kniȝtes tene <sup>20</sup> 20  
 To chaumber riȝt bifer þe quene,  
 And biheld, and seyde wiþ grete pite:  
 'O lef liif, what is te,<sup>21</sup>  
 Þat ever ȝete hast ben so stille,  
 And now gredest <sup>22</sup> wonder schille <sup>23</sup>? 25  
 Þi bodi, þat was so white ycore,<sup>24</sup>  
 Wiþ þine nailes is al totore.<sup>25</sup>  
 Alas! þi rode,<sup>26</sup> þat was so red,  
 Is as wan as þou were ded,

<sup>1</sup> scratched<sup>2</sup> MS. hye<sup>3</sup> rent apart<sup>4</sup> ravished; MS. reneyd<sup>5</sup> MS. too<sup>6</sup> longer<sup>7</sup> ran<sup>8</sup> go mad<sup>9</sup> restrain<sup>10</sup> they<sup>11</sup> their<sup>12</sup> took<sup>13</sup> at the<sup>14</sup> very<sup>15</sup> continued<sup>16</sup> one<sup>17</sup> away<sup>18</sup> it was not<sup>19</sup> because of<sup>20</sup> ten<sup>21</sup> what is ill with thee<sup>22</sup> dost cry<sup>23</sup> wondrous shrill(y)<sup>24</sup> choicely<sup>25</sup> rent<sup>26</sup> complexion

- And also þine fingres smale  
 Beþ al blodi and al pale!  
 Allas, þi lovesum eygen to <sup>1</sup>  
 Lokeþ so <sup>2</sup> man doþ on his fo!  
 5 A, dame, Ich biseche merci!  
 Lete ben <sup>3</sup> al þis reweful cri,  
 And tel me what þe is <sup>4</sup> and hou,  
 And what þing may þe help now.'  
 Þo lay sche stille atte last,  
 10 And gan to wepe swiþe fast,  
 And seyð þus þe king to:  
 'Allas, mi lord, sir Orfeo!  
 Seppen we first togider were,  
 Ones <sup>5</sup> wroþ <sup>6</sup> never we nere <sup>7</sup>;  
 15 Bot ever Ich have yloved þe  
 As mi liif, and so þou me.  
 Ac now we mot delen ato <sup>8</sup>;  
 Do þi best, for y mot <sup>9</sup> go.'  
 'Allas,' quap he, 'forlorn Ich am!  
 20 Whider wiltow go, and to wham?  
 Whider þou gost, Ichil <sup>10</sup> wiþ þe,  
 And whider Y go, þou schalt wiþ me.'  
 'Nay, nay, sir, þat nougt nis <sup>11</sup>;  
 Ichil þe telle al hou it is:  
 25 As Ich lay þis undertide,  
 And slepe under our orchard-side,  
 Þer come to me to <sup>1</sup> fair knyghtes,  
 Wele y-armed <sup>12</sup> al to rygtes,  
 And bad me comen on <sup>13</sup> heiging, <sup>14</sup>  
 30 And speke wiþ her <sup>15</sup> lord þe king.  
 And Ich answerd at <sup>16</sup> wordes bold,

<sup>1</sup> two<sup>2</sup> as<sup>3</sup> put aside, cease<sup>4</sup> what ails thee<sup>5</sup> once<sup>6</sup> angry<sup>7</sup> were not<sup>8</sup> separate (part in two)<sup>9</sup> must<sup>10</sup> I will<sup>11</sup> that is in no way possible<sup>12</sup> armed<sup>13</sup> MS. an<sup>14</sup> in haste<sup>15</sup> their<sup>16</sup> with

Y durst nougt, no Y nold.<sup>1</sup>  
 Þai priked<sup>2</sup> ogain, as þai miȝt drive<sup>3</sup>;  
 Þo kom her king also blive,<sup>4</sup>  
 Wiþ an hundred kniȝtes and mo,  
 And damisels an hundred also,  
 Al on snowe-white stedes;  
 As white as milke were her wedes.<sup>5</sup>  
 Y no seiȝe never ȝete bifore  
 So fair creatours ycore.<sup>6</sup>  
 Þe king hadde a croun on hed;  
 It nas of silver, no of gold red,  
 Ac<sup>7</sup> it was of a precious ston;  
 As briȝt as þe sonne it schon.  
 And as son as he to me cam,  
 Wold Ich, nold Ich,<sup>8</sup> he me nam,<sup>9</sup>  
 And made me wiþ him ride  
 Opon a palfray bi his side,  
 And brouȝt me to his palays,  
 Wele atird<sup>10</sup> in ich ways,<sup>11</sup>  
 And schewed me castels and tours,  
 Rivers, forestes, friþ<sup>12</sup> wiþ flours,  
 And his riche stedes<sup>13</sup> ichon;  
 And seȝþen me brouȝt ogain hom  
 Into our owen<sup>14</sup> orchard;  
 And said to me þus afterward:  
 "Loke, dame, to-morwe þatow<sup>15</sup> be  
 Riȝt here under þis ympe-tre,  
 And þan þou schalt wiþ ous<sup>16</sup> go,  
 And live wiþ ous evermo;  
 And ȝif þou makest ous ylet,<sup>17</sup>  
 Whar<sup>18</sup> þou be, þou worst yfet,<sup>19</sup>

<sup>1</sup> nor would I  
<sup>2</sup> rode hard  
<sup>3</sup> hasten  
<sup>4</sup> very quickly  
<sup>5</sup> their garments  
<sup>6</sup> chosen out  
<sup>7</sup> but

<sup>8</sup> whether I was willing or not  
 (would I, would I not)  
<sup>9</sup> took  
<sup>10</sup> adorned  
<sup>11</sup> in all ways  
<sup>12</sup> glade  
<sup>13</sup> places

<sup>14</sup> own  
<sup>15</sup> that thou  
<sup>16</sup> us  
<sup>17</sup> delay  
<sup>18</sup> wherever  
<sup>19</sup> shalt be fetched

*she king also cam*

*place, see p 95, 21*

And totore þine limes al,  
 Þat noping help þe no schal;  
 And þei<sup>1</sup> þou best<sup>2</sup> so totorn,  
 Zete þou worst<sup>3</sup> wiþ ous yborn.<sup>4</sup>”<sup>5</sup>  
 5       When king Orfeo herd þis cas,<sup>6</sup>  
 ‘Owe<sup>6</sup>!’ quap he, ‘allas, allas!  
 Lever me were to lete<sup>7</sup> mi liif,  
 Þan þus to lese<sup>8</sup> þe quen mi wiif!’  
 He asked conseyl at<sup>9</sup> ich man,  
 10       Ac no man him help no can.  
 Amorwe<sup>10</sup> þe undertide is come,  
 And Orfeo hap his armes ynome,<sup>11</sup>  
 And wele ten hundred knyghtes wiþ him,  
 Ich y-armed stout and grim;  
 15       And wiþ þe quen wenten he<sup>12</sup>  
 Rigt unto þat ympe-tre.  
 Þai made scheltrom<sup>13</sup> in icha side,<sup>14</sup>  
 And sayd þai wold þere abide,  
 And dye þer everichon,  
 20       Er þe quen schuld from hem gon.  
 Ac zete amiddes hem ful rigt<sup>15</sup>  
 Þe quen was oway ytwigt,<sup>16</sup>  
 Wiþ fairi<sup>17</sup> forþ ynome;  
 Men wist never wher sche was bicom.<sup>18</sup>  
 25       Þo was þer criing, wepe, and wo;  
 Þe king into his chaumber is go,<sup>19</sup>  
 And oft swoned opon þe ston,  
 And made swiche diol<sup>20</sup> and swiche mon  
 Þat neize his liif was yspent —  
 30       Þer was no amendement.  
 He cleped togider his barouns,

1 though  
 2 be  
 3 shalt be  
 4 carried away  
 5 situation  
 6 O woe  
 7 give up

8 lose  
 9 from  
 10 on the morrow  
 11 taken  
 12 they  
 13 band, troop  
 14 each side

15 from amidst them  
 16 snatched; MS. ytwight  
 17 by witchcraft, magic  
 18 what was become of her  
 19 gone  
 20 dole



Erls, lordes of renouns <sup>1</sup> ;  
 And when þai al ycomen were,  
 'Lordinges,' he said, 'bifore ȝou here  
 Ich ordainy min heige-steward  
 To wite <sup>2</sup> mi kingdom afterward ; 5  
 In mi stede ben he schal,  
 To kepe mi londes over al.  
 For, now Ichave mi quen ylore,<sup>3</sup>  
 Þe fairest levedi þat ever was bore,  
 Never eft Y nil <sup>4</sup> no woman se ; 10  
 Into wildernes Ichil te,<sup>5</sup>  
 And live per evermore  
 Wip wilde bestes in holtes <sup>6</sup> hore.<sup>7</sup>  
 And when ȝe understond þat Y be spent,<sup>8</sup>  
 Make ȝou þan a parlement, 15  
 And chese ȝou a newe king ;  
 Now doþ ȝour best wip al mi þing.<sup>9</sup>  
 Þo was per wepeing in þe halle,  
 And grete cri among hem alle ;  
 Unneþe <sup>10</sup> miȝt old or ȝong 20  
 For wepeing speke a word wip tong.  
 Þai kneled adoun al yfere,  
 And praid him, ȝif his wille were,  
 Þat he no schuld fram hem go ;  
 'Do way,' quap he, 'it schal be so.' 25  
 Al his kingdom he forsoke,  
 Bot a sclavin <sup>11</sup> on him he <sup>12</sup> toke — *Calp*  
 He ne hadde kirtel no hode,  
 Schert, [ne] non oþer gode.  
 Bot his harp he tok, algate,<sup>13</sup> 30  
 And dede him barfot out atte ȝate ;  
 No man most <sup>14</sup> wip him go.

<sup>1</sup> renowned<sup>2</sup> rule<sup>3</sup> lost<sup>4</sup> will not<sup>5</sup> journey<sup>6</sup> forests<sup>7</sup> gray (from lichens or bareness)<sup>8</sup> dead<sup>9</sup> property<sup>10</sup> scarcely, with difficulty<sup>11</sup> pilgrim's mantle<sup>12</sup> MS. te<sup>13</sup> notwithstanding<sup>14</sup> was allowed

Oway ! what þer was wepe and wo,  
 When he þat hadde ben king wiþ croun,  
 Went so poverlich out of toun !  
 Þurch wode and over heþ  
 5 Into þe wildernes he geþ ;  
 Noþing he fint þat him is ays,<sup>1</sup>  
 Bot ever he liveþ in gret malais.<sup>2</sup>  
 He þat hadde ywed<sup>3</sup> þe fowe<sup>4</sup> and griis,<sup>5</sup>  
 And on bed þe purper biis,<sup>6</sup>  
 10 Now on hard heþe he liþ,  
 Wiþ leves and gresse he him wriþ.<sup>7</sup>  
 He þat hadde had castels and tours,  
 River, forest, friþ wiþ flours,  
 Now, þei<sup>8</sup> it comenci to snewe<sup>9</sup> and frese,  
 15 Þis king mote make his bed in mese<sup>10</sup> ;  
 He þat had yhad kniȝtes of priis  
 Bifor him kneland, and levedis,  
 Now seþ he noþing þat him likeþ,<sup>11</sup>  
 Bot wilde wormes bi him strikeþ<sup>12</sup> ;  
 20 He þat had yhad plente  
 Of mete and drink, of ich deynte,  
 Now may he al day digge and wrote,<sup>13</sup>  
 Er he finde his fille of rote.<sup>14</sup>  
 In somer he liveþ bi<sup>15</sup> wild frut  
 25 And berren<sup>16</sup> bot gode lut<sup>17</sup> ;  
 In winter may he noþing finde  
 Bot rote, grasses, and þe rinde.<sup>18</sup>  
 Al his bodi was oway dwine<sup>19</sup>  
 For missays,<sup>20</sup> and al tochine.<sup>21</sup>  
 30 Lord ! who may telle þe sore<sup>22</sup>

1 ease  
 2 distress, discomfort  
 3 worn  
 4 variegated fur  
 5 gray fur  
 6 fine linen (Lat. *byssus*)  
 7 covers  
 8 though

9 snow  
 10 moss  
 11 pleaseth  
 12 slip, crawl  
 13 grub  
 14 roots  
 15 on  
 16 berries

17 very few (good little) ; MS. lite  
 18 bark  
 19 shrunk ; MS. dvine  
 20 discomfort  
 21 chapped  
 22 pain

*10 years more*

Þis king sufferd ten gere and more?  
 His here of his berd, blac and rowe,<sup>1</sup>  
 To his girdelstede was growe;  
 His harp, whereon was al his gle,  
 He hidde in an holwe tre;  
 And, when þe weder was clere and brigȝt,  
 He toke his harp to him wel rigȝt,  
 And harped at his owen wille;  
 Into alle þe wode þe soun gan schille,<sup>2</sup>  
 Þat alle þe wilde bestes þat þer bep  
 For joie abouten him þai tep,<sup>3</sup>  
 And alle þe foules þat þer were  
 Come and sæte on ich a brere,<sup>4</sup>  
 To here his harping afin,<sup>5</sup>  
 So miche melody was þerin;  
 And when he his harping lete ° wold,  
 No best bi him abide nold.

5

10

15

He miȝt se him bisides  
 Oft in hot undertides  
 Þe king o fairi,<sup>7</sup> wiȝ his rout,  
 Com to hunt him al about,  
 Wiȝ dun,<sup>8</sup> [with] cri and bloweing,<sup>9</sup>  
 And houndes also wiȝ him berking;  
 Ac no best þai no nome,<sup>10</sup>  
 No never he nist<sup>11</sup> whider þai bicomē.  
 And oȝer while he miȝt him se  
 As a gret ost bi him te<sup>12</sup> —  
 Wele atourned<sup>13</sup> ten hundred kniȝtes,  
 Ich y-armed to his rigȝtes,<sup>14</sup>  
 Of contenance stout and fers,  
 Wiȝ mani desplaid baners,

20

25

30

<sup>1</sup> rough  
<sup>2</sup> did shrill

<sup>3</sup> draw

<sup>4</sup> briar

<sup>5</sup> perfectly; MS. afine

<sup>6</sup> stop

<sup>7</sup> fairyland

<sup>8</sup> din

<sup>9</sup> blowing of horns

<sup>10</sup> did they take

<sup>11</sup> knew not

<sup>12</sup> come

<sup>13</sup> appointed, fitted out

<sup>14</sup> properly

And ich his swerd ydrawe hold,<sup>1</sup>  
Ac never he nist whider pai wold.

And oþer while he seige oþer þing :  
Knigtes and levedis com daunceing,  
In queynt atire, gisely,<sup>2</sup>  
[With] queynt[e] <sup>3</sup> pas and soft[e]ly ;  
Tabours and trumpes <sup>4</sup> gede hem bi,  
And al maner menstraci.

And on a day he seige him biside  
Sexti levedis on hors ride,  
Gentil and jolif <sup>5</sup> as brid on ris <sup>6</sup> —  
Nouȝt o man amonges hem þer nis ;  
And ich a faucoun on hond bere,<sup>7</sup>  
And riden on haukin[g] bi o riverse.  
Of game pai founde wel gode haunt <sup>8</sup> —  
Maulardes,<sup>9</sup> hayroun,<sup>10</sup> and cormeraunt.

þe foules of þe water ariseþ,  
þe faucouns hem wele deviseþ <sup>11</sup> :  
Ich faucoun his pray slouȝ.  
þat seige Orfeo, and louȝ.<sup>12</sup>  
' Parfay,<sup>13</sup> ' quap he, ' þer is fair game,  
þider Ichil, bi Godes name !  
Ich was ywon <sup>14</sup> swiche werk to se ' ;  
He aros, and þider gan te.

To a levedi he was ycome,  
Biheld, and haþ wele undernome,<sup>15</sup>  
And seþ bi al þing þat it is  
His owen quen, Dam Heurodis.  
Ȝern <sup>16</sup> he biheld hir, and sche him eke,  
Ac noiþer to oþer a word no speke.  
For messais þat sche on him seige,

<sup>1</sup> held<sup>2</sup> handsomely<sup>3</sup> dainty<sup>4</sup> drums and trumpets ; MS.

trimpes

<sup>5</sup> merry<sup>6</sup> spray, twig<sup>7</sup> inf. after *seige*, line 9<sup>8</sup> resort<sup>9</sup> mallards (wild ducks)<sup>10</sup> heron<sup>11</sup> make their plans well<sup>12</sup> laughed<sup>13</sup> by (my) faith<sup>14</sup> wont, accustomed<sup>15</sup> perceived<sup>16</sup> eagerly, gladly

*27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.*

þat had ben so riche and so heize,<sup>1</sup>  
 þe teres fel out of her eize.  
 þe oþer levedis þis yseige,  
 And maked hir oway to ride —  
 Sche most wiþ him no lenger abide. 5  
 'Allas,' quap he, 'now me is wo!  
 Whi nil<sup>2</sup> deþ now me slo?  
 Allas, wreche,<sup>3</sup> þat Y no migt  
 Dye now after þis sigt!  
 Allas! to<sup>4</sup> long last mi liif, 10  
 When Y no dar nougt wiþ mi wiif,  
 No hye<sup>5</sup> to me, o word speke.  
 Allas! whi nil min hert breke?  
 Parfay,' quap he, 'tide wat bitide,<sup>6</sup>  
 Whider so þis<sup>7</sup> levedis ride, 15  
 þe selve<sup>8</sup> way Ichil streche<sup>9</sup>;  
 Of liif no deþ me no reche.<sup>10</sup>

His sclavain<sup>+</sup> he dede<sup>11</sup> on, als he<sup>12</sup> spac,<sup>13</sup>  
 And henge his harp opon his bac,  
 And had wel gode wil to gon — 20  
 He no spard noiþer stub no ston.  
In at a roche þe leuedis rideþ, rides into  
 And he after, and nougt abideþ. it north

When he was in þe roche ygo  
 Wele þre mile oþer<sup>14</sup> mo, 25  
 He com into a fair cuntray,  
 As briht so<sup>15</sup> sonne on somers day,  
 Smoþe and plain and al grene —  
 Hille no dale was þer non ysene.  
 Amidde þe lond a castel he s[e]ige,  
 Riche and real<sup>16</sup> and wonder heize. 30

<sup>1</sup> high, lofty<sup>2</sup> will not<sup>3</sup> miserable that I am<sup>4</sup> too<sup>5</sup> nor she<sup>6</sup> happen what may happen<sup>7</sup> these<sup>8</sup> same<sup>9</sup> go<sup>10</sup> I care not<sup>11</sup> put<sup>12</sup> MS. al so<sup>13</sup> spoke<sup>14</sup> or<sup>15</sup> as<sup>16</sup> royal

\* See note 11 p. 95

Al þe utmast wal  
 Was clere and schine <sup>1</sup> as cristal;  
 An hundred tours þer were about,  
 Degiselich <sup>2</sup> and bataild stout;  
 5 þe butras com out of þe diche, <sup>3</sup>  
 Of rede gold y-arched <sup>4</sup> riche;  
 þe bonsour <sup>5</sup> was anourned <sup>6</sup> al  
 Of ich maner divers animal;  
 Wipin þer wer wide wones, <sup>7</sup>  
 10 Al of precious stones;  
 þe werst piler on to biholde <sup>8</sup>  
 Was al of burnist gold.  
 Al þat lond was ever ligt:  
 For when it schuld be þerk <sup>9</sup> and niȝt,  
 15 þe riche stones ligt gonne, <sup>10</sup>  
 As briȝt as doȝ at none þe sonne.  
 No man may telle, no þenche in þougȝt,  
 þe riche werk þat þer was wrouȝt;  
 Bi al þing him þink <sup>11</sup> þat it is  
 20 þe proude court of Paradis.  
 In þis castel þe levedis aliȝt;  
 He wold in after, ȝif he miȝt:  
 Orfeo knokkeþ atte gate;  
 þe porter was redi þerate,  
 25 And asked what he wold have ydo.  
 'Parfay,' quap he, 'Ich am a minstrel, lo!  
 To solas þi lord wiþ mi gle,  
 Ȝif his suete wille be.'  
 þe porter undede þe ȝate anon,  
 30 And lete him into þe castel gon.  
 Þan he gan bihold about al,  
 And seiȝe ful <sup>12</sup> liggeand <sup>13</sup> wipin þe wal

<sup>1</sup> bright, beautiful<sup>2</sup> elaborately ornamented<sup>3</sup> moat<sup>4</sup> arched<sup>5</sup> arch<sup>6</sup> adorned; MS. avowed<sup>7</sup> apartments<sup>8</sup> to look on; in appearance<sup>9</sup> dark<sup>10</sup> began to shine<sup>11</sup> it would seem to him<sup>12</sup> full many<sup>13</sup> lying

Of folk þat were þider ybrougt,  
 And þougt dede, and nere nougt.  
 Sum stode wiþouten hade,<sup>1</sup>  
 And sum non armes nade,<sup>2</sup>  
 And sum purch þe bodi hadde wounde,  
 And sum lay wode,<sup>3</sup> ybounde,  
 And sum, armed, on hors sete,  
 And sum astrangled as þai ete,  
 And sum were in water adreynt,<sup>4</sup>  
 And sum wiþ fire al forschreynt<sup>5</sup>;  
 Wives þer lay on childbedde,  
 Sum ded, and sum awedde<sup>6</sup>;  
 And wonder fele þer lay bisides,  
 Riȝt as þai slepe her ' undertides;  
 Eche was þus in pis warld ynome,  
 Wiþ fairi<sup>8</sup> þider ycome.  
 Þer he seiȝe his owen wiif,  
 Dame Heurodis, his lef<sup>9</sup> liif,  
 Slepe under an ympe-tre :  
 Bi her cloþes he knewe þat it was he.<sup>10</sup>  
 And when he hadde bihold pis<sup>11</sup> mervails alle,  
 He went into þe kinges halle;  
 Þan seiȝe he þer a semly<sup>12</sup> siȝt —  
 A tabernacle blisseful and briȝt,  
 Þerin her<sup>7</sup> maister king sete,  
 And her quen fair and swete.  
 Her<sup>7</sup> crounes, her<sup>7</sup> cloþes schine so briȝt,  
 Þat unneþe<sup>18</sup> bihold he hem miȝt.  
 When he hadde biholden al þat þing,  
 He kneled adoun bifor þe king.

*The enchanted.*

5

10

*check.*

15

20

25

30

<sup>1</sup> head  
<sup>2</sup> had not  
<sup>3</sup> mad  
<sup>4</sup> drowned  
<sup>5</sup> parched

<sup>6</sup> out of their minds  
<sup>7</sup> their  
<sup>8</sup> enchantment  
<sup>9</sup> dear; MS. liif (see 91 28)  
<sup>10</sup> she

<sup>11</sup> these  
<sup>12</sup> comely  
<sup>18</sup> with difficulty

- 'O lord,' he seyð, ' gif it þi wille were,  
 Mi menstraci þou schust<sup>1</sup> yhere.'  
 Þe king answerd: ' What man artow,  
 Þat art hider ycomen now?  
 5 Ich, no non þat is wiþ me,  
 No sent never after þe;  
 Seppen þat Ich here regni gan,  
 Y no fond so folehardi man  
 Þat hider to ous durst wende,  
 10 Bot þat Ichim wold ofsende.<sup>2</sup>'  
 ' Lord,' quap he, ' trowe<sup>3</sup> ful wel,  
 Y nam bot<sup>4</sup> a pover menstrel;  
 And, sir, it is þe maner of ous  
 To seche<sup>5</sup> mani a lordes hous;  
 15 Þei we nougt welcom no be,  
 ðete we mot<sup>6</sup> proferi forþ our gle.<sup>7</sup>'  
 Bifore þe king he sat adoun,  
 And tok his harp so miri of soun,  
 And temprep<sup>8</sup> his harp, as he wele can,  
 20 And blisseful notes he þer gan,  
 Þat al þat in þe palays were  
 Com to him for to here,  
 And liggeþ<sup>9</sup> adoun to<sup>10</sup> his fete —  
 Hem þenkeþ<sup>11</sup> his melody so swete.  
 25 Þe king herknep and sitt ful stille,  
 To here his gle he haþ gode wille;  
 Gode bourde<sup>12</sup> he hadde of his gle,  
 Þe riche quen also hadde he.<sup>13</sup>  
 When he hadde stint<sup>14</sup> his harping,  
 30 þan seyð to him þe king:  
 ' Menstrel, me likeþ wele þi gle;  
 Now aske of me what it be,

1 shalt  
 2 send for  
 3 believe  
 4 am only  
 5 seek

6 must needs  
 7 song, music  
 8 tunes  
 9 lie  
 10 at

11 to them seems  
 12 amusement, enjoyment  
 13 she  
 14 ceased



Largelich <sup>1</sup> Ichil <sup>2</sup> þe pay.  
 Now speke, and tow migt asay.<sup>3</sup>  
 'Sir,' he seyð, 'Ich biseche þe  
 þatow woldest ȝive me  
 þat ich <sup>4</sup> levedi, brygt on ble,<sup>5</sup> 5  
 þat slepeþ under þe ympe-tre.'  
 'Nay,' quap þe king, 'þat nouȝt nere <sup>6</sup>!  
 A sori couple of ȝou it were,  
 For þou art lene, rowe,<sup>7</sup> and blac,  
 And sche is lovesum, witþouten lac <sup>8</sup>; 10  
 A loþlich <sup>9</sup> þing it were, forþi,<sup>10</sup>  
 To sen hir in þi compayni.'  
 'O sir,' he seyð, 'gentil king,  
 Ȝete were it a wele fouler þing  
 To here a lesing <sup>11</sup> of <sup>12</sup> þi mouþe; 15  
 So, sir, as ȝe seyð nouþe,<sup>13</sup>  
 What I wold aski, have Y schold;  
 And nedes þou most þi word hold.<sup>14</sup>  
 Þe king seyð: 'Seppen it is so,  
 Take hir bi þe hond, and go; 20  
 Of hir Ichil þatow <sup>15</sup> be bliþe.'  
 He knelyd adoun, and ponked him swiþe;  
 His wiif he tok bi þe hond,  
 And dede <sup>16</sup> him swiþe out of þat lond,  
 And went him out of þat þede <sup>17</sup>; 25  
 Rigt as he come, þe way he ȝede.  
 So long he hap þe way ynome,  
 To Traciens he is ycome,  
 þat was his owen cite;  
 Ac no man knewe þat it was he. 30  
 No forþer þan þe tounes ende

<sup>1</sup> generously<sup>2</sup> I will<sup>3</sup> if thou canst make trial<sup>4</sup> same<sup>5</sup> of hue<sup>6</sup> were not possible<sup>7</sup> rough<sup>8</sup> lack, fault<sup>9</sup> loathsome, dreadful<sup>10</sup> therefore<sup>11</sup> lie<sup>12</sup> from<sup>13</sup> now<sup>14</sup> keep<sup>15</sup> that thou<sup>16</sup> went<sup>17</sup> people

For knoweleche <sup>1</sup> [he] ne durst wende ;  
 Bot wiþ a begger ybilt <sup>2</sup> ful narwe.  
 Þer he tok his herbarwe <sup>3</sup>  
 To <sup>4</sup> him and to his owen wiif  
 5 As a minstrel of pover liif,  
 And asked tidings of þat lond,  
 And who þe kingdom held in hond.  
 Þe pover begger in his cote <sup>5</sup>  
 Told him everich a grot <sup>6</sup> —  
 10 How her quen was stole owy,  
 Ten ȝer gon, <sup>7</sup> wiþ <sup>8</sup> fairy ;  
 And hou her <sup>9</sup> king in exile ȝede,  
 Bot no <sup>10</sup> man nist in wiche þede ;  
 And hou þe steward þe lond gan hold ;  
 15 And oþer mani þinges him told.  
 Amorwe oȝain none tide, <sup>11</sup>  
 He maked his wiif þer abide ;  
 Þe beggers cloþes he borwed <sup>12</sup> anon,  
 And heng his harp his rigge <sup>13</sup> opon,  
 20 And went him into þat cite,  
 Þat men miȝt him bihold and se.  
 Erls and barouns bold,  
 Buriays <sup>14</sup> and levedis him gan bihold.  
 'Lo,' þai seyð, ' swiche a man !  
 25 How long þe here hongep him opan !  
 Lo, hou his berd hongep to his kne !  
 He is yclongen <sup>15</sup> also a tre !'  
 And as he ȝede in þe strete,  
 Wiþ his steward he gan mete,  
 30 And loude he sett on him a crie :  
 ' Sir steward,' he seyð, ' merci !  
 Ich am an harpour of heþenisse <sup>16</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> for fear of being recognized<sup>2</sup> lodged<sup>3</sup> shelter<sup>4</sup> for<sup>5</sup> cot<sup>6</sup> every little bit, every detail<sup>7</sup> ago<sup>8</sup> by<sup>9</sup> their<sup>10</sup> MS. so<sup>11</sup> towards noon<sup>12</sup> borrowed ; MS. borwed<sup>13</sup> back<sup>14</sup> burgesses, citizens<sup>15</sup> shrunk, withered<sup>16</sup> from heathendom

Help me now in þis destresse !<sup>1</sup>

þe steward seyð : ' Com wiþ me home<sup>1</sup> ;

Of þat Ichave, þou schalt have some.

Everich gode harpoure is welcom me to,

For mi lordes love, Sir Orfeo.

5

In þe castel þe steward sat atte mete,

And many lording was bi him sete ;

þer were trompoure[s] and tabourers,

Harpours fele, and crouders.<sup>2</sup>

Miche melody þei maked alle ;

10

And Orfeo sat stille in þe halle,

And herknep. When þei ben al stille,

He toke his harp and tempred schille<sup>3</sup> ;

þe blissefulest notes he harped þere

þat ever ani man yherd wiþ ere ;

15

Ich man liked wele his gle.

þe steward biheld and gan yse,

And knewe þe harp also<sup>4</sup> blive.<sup>5</sup>

' Menstrel,' he seyð, ' so mot þou þrive,<sup>6</sup>

Where hadestow þis harp, and hou ?

Y pray þat þou me telle now.'

' Lord,' quap he, ' in uncouþe<sup>7</sup> þede,

þurch a wildernes as Y gede,

þer Y founde, in a dale,

Wiþ<sup>8</sup> lyouns a man totorn smale,

25

And wolves him frete<sup>9</sup> wiþ teþ so scharp.

Bi him Y fond þis ich[a]<sup>10</sup> harp ;

Wele ten gere it is ygo.'

' O,' quap þe steward, ' now me is wo !

þat was mi lord, Sir Orfeo.

30

Allas, wreche, what schal Y do,

þat have swiche a lord ylore ?

Away,<sup>11</sup> þat Ich was ybore !

*Steward recognises  
sophisticated*

26

<sup>1</sup> MS: come

<sup>2</sup> players on the crowd, an early  
Celtic form of the violin

<sup>3</sup> shrilly

<sup>4</sup> MS. als

<sup>5</sup> instantly

<sup>6</sup> mayst thou prosper

<sup>7</sup> strange

<sup>8</sup> by

<sup>9</sup> devoured

<sup>10</sup> same

<sup>11</sup> woe

þat him was so hard grace<sup>1</sup> yzarked,<sup>2</sup>  
 And so vile dep ymarked<sup>3</sup> !'  
 Adoun he fel aswon to grounde.  
 His barouns him toke up in þat stounde,<sup>4</sup>  
 5 And telleþ him hou it geþ —  
 It is no bot<sup>6</sup> of manes dep.

King Orfeo knewe wele biþan  
 His steward was a trewe man ;  
 And loved him, as he aught to do,  
 10 And stont up and seyð<sup>6</sup> þus : ' Lo,  
 Steward, herkne now þis þing :  
 Ȝif Ich were Orfeo þe king,  
 And hadde ysuffred ful gore<sup>7</sup>  
 In wildernisse miche sore ;  
 15 And hadde ywon mi quen owy  
 Out of þe lond of fairy ;  
 And hadde ybrougt þe levedi hende<sup>8</sup>  
 Rigt here to þe tounes ende,  
 And wiþ a begger her in ynome ;  
 20 And were miself hider ycome  
 Poverlich to þe, þus stille,  
 For to asay þi gode wille ;  
 And ich founde þe þus trewe,  
 Þou no schust it never rewe<sup>9</sup> :  
 25 Sikerlich,<sup>10</sup> for love or ay,<sup>11</sup>  
 Þou schust be king after mi day.  
 Ȝif<sup>12</sup> þou of mi dep hadest ben bliþe,  
 Þou schust ben voided<sup>13</sup> also swipe.<sup>14</sup>  
 Þo al þo<sup>15</sup> þat perein sete  
 30 þat it was King Orfeo undergete,<sup>16</sup>  
 And þe steward him wele knewe.

<sup>1</sup> such misfortune<sup>2</sup> appointed<sup>3</sup> decreed<sup>4</sup> time<sup>5</sup> help<sup>6</sup> MS. seyt<sup>7</sup> for a long time past<sup>8</sup> gentle, gracious<sup>9</sup> repent<sup>10</sup> truly<sup>11</sup> or fear<sup>12</sup> MS. and gif<sup>13</sup> shouldst have been put out<sup>14</sup> in all haste<sup>15</sup> then all those<sup>16</sup> understood, perceived

Over and over þe bord <sup>1</sup> he þrewe,  
 And fel adoun to his fet;  
 So dede everich lord þat þer sete;  
 And al þai seyð at o criiing:  
 'Ze bep our lord, sir, and our king!' 5  
 Glad þai were of his live.<sup>2</sup>  
 To chaumber þai ladde him also <sup>3</sup> blive,<sup>4</sup>  
 And baped him, and schaved his berd,  
 And tired <sup>5</sup> him as a king apert <sup>6</sup>;  
 And seþþen <sup>7</sup> wiþ gret processiou 10  
 þai brougt þe quen into þat toun,  
 Wiþ al maner menstraci.  
 Lord, þer was grete melody!  
 For joie þai wepe wiþ her eige,  
 þat hem so sounde <sup>8</sup> ycomen seige. 15  
 Now king Orfeo newe coround is,  
 And his quen Dame Heurodis,  
 And lived long afterward;  
 And seþþen was king þe steward.  
 Harpours in Bretaine afterþan 20  
 Herd hou þis mervaille bigan,  
 And made <sup>9</sup> a lay of gode likeiing,  
 And nempned it after þe king;  
 þat lay 'Orfeo' is yhote <sup>10</sup> —  
 Gode is þe lay, swete is þe note. 25  
 þus com Sir Orfeo out of his care;  
 God graunt ous alle wele to fare.

<sup>1</sup> table<sup>2</sup> life<sup>3</sup> MS. als<sup>4</sup> as quickly as possible<sup>5</sup> attired<sup>6</sup> evident in his looks<sup>7</sup> afterwards<sup>8</sup> well in body<sup>9</sup> MS. made hereof<sup>10</sup> called

## CHAUCER, SIR THOPAS

*Sir Thopas* is well characterized by Ker (*English Literature: Medieval*, pp. 129-31): 'Chaucer's burlesque is easily misunderstood. It is criticism, and it is ridicule; it shows up the true character of the common minstrelsy — the rambling narrative, the conventional stopgaps, the complacent childish vanity of the popular artist who has his audience in front of him, and knows all the easy tricks by which he can hold their attention. . . . Chaucer has made a good thing out of the rhyme doggerel, and expresses the pleasant old-fashioned quality of the minstrels' romances, as well as their absurdities. His parody touches on the want of plan and method and meaning in the popular rhymes of chivalry; it is also intended as criticism of their verse. That verse . . . is technically called *rime coule* or "tail-rhyme." . . . It very readily becomes monotonous and flat. . . . But it is a form of stanza which may be so used as to escape the besetting faults; the fact that it has survived through all the changes of literary fashion, and has been used by poets in all the different centuries, is something to the credit of the minstrels, as against the rude common-sense criticism of the Host of the Tabard when he stopped the Rime of *Sir Thopas*.' Skeat also is tempted to break a lance in behalf of the poem (Chaucer, *Works* 3. 424): 'I cannot quite resist the suspicion that Chaucer may himself, in his youth, have tried his hand at such romance-writing in all seriousness, but lived to have a good-humored laugh even in some degree at his own expense; and he seems as if endeavoring to make his readers feel that they could wish there was somewhat more of it.'

For the parodies in detail, see Bennewitz' dissertation (Halle, 1879); Kölbing's article in *Englische Studien*, Vol. 11; and Skeat's notes. Our text in general follows Skeat.

For Chaucer in general, see Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer* (Boston, 1922), Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 1913), or Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 267-343. To the investigator, Miss Hammond's *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual* (New York, 1908) is indispensable.

## I

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,<sup>1</sup>  
 And I wol telle verrayment<sup>2</sup>  
 Of mirthe and of solas<sup>3</sup>;  
 Al of a knyght was fair and gent<sup>4</sup>  
 In bataille and in tourneyment —  
 His name was Sir Thopas.

<sup>1</sup> with good will<sup>2</sup> verily<sup>3</sup> diversion<sup>4</sup> refined, noble

Yborn he was in fer contree,  
 In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,  
     At Popering,<sup>1</sup> in the place<sup>2</sup>;  
 His fader was a man ful free,<sup>8</sup>  
 And lord he was of that contree,  
     As it was Goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex<sup>4</sup> a doghty<sup>5</sup> swayn;  
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn,<sup>6</sup>  
     His lippes rede as rose;  
 His rode<sup>7</sup> was<sup>8</sup> lyk scarlet in grayn,<sup>9</sup>  
 And I yow telle in good certayn,  
     He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,<sup>10</sup>  
 That to his girdel raughte<sup>11</sup> adoun,  
     His shoon<sup>12</sup> of Cordewane<sup>13</sup>;  
 Of Brugges<sup>14</sup> were his hosen<sup>15</sup> broun;  
 His robe was of ciclatoun<sup>16</sup>  
     That coste many a jane.<sup>17</sup>

He coude hunte at wilde deer,  
 And ryde an hauking for riveer,<sup>18</sup>  
 With grey goshawk on honde;  
 Therto he was a good archeer;  
 Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,  
     Ther<sup>19</sup> any ram<sup>20</sup> shal stonde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,<sup>21</sup>  
 They moorne for him, paramour,<sup>22</sup>  
     Whan hem were bet<sup>23</sup> to slepe;

<sup>1</sup> a small town in the district of Calais, southwest of Ostend

<sup>2</sup> manor-house, chief house of a town or village

<sup>8</sup> noble

<sup>4</sup> grew to be

<sup>5</sup> valiant

<sup>6</sup> very fine white bread

<sup>7</sup> complexion (OE. *rudu*)

<sup>8</sup> MS is

<sup>9</sup> dyed with cochineal; of a fast color

<sup>10</sup> yellow

<sup>11</sup> reached

<sup>12</sup> shoes

<sup>13</sup> Cordovan leather

<sup>14</sup> Bruges, in Belgium

<sup>15</sup> tight-fitting trousers, covering the feet

<sup>16</sup> costly material, often embroidered with gold

<sup>17</sup> small coin of Genoa, referred to in England as halfpence

<sup>18</sup> towards the river

<sup>19</sup> where

<sup>20</sup> A ram was the usual prize at a wrestling-match

<sup>21</sup> bower

<sup>22</sup> longingly

<sup>23</sup> it were better for them,

But he was chaste and no lechour,<sup>1</sup>  
 And sweet as is the bremble-flour<sup>2</sup>  
 That bereth the rede hepe.<sup>3</sup>

5 And so bifel upon a day,  
 Forsothe, as I yow telle may,  
 Sir Thopas wolde out ryde ;  
 He worth upon<sup>4</sup> his stede gray,  
 And in his honde a launcegay,<sup>5</sup>  
 A long swerd by his syde.

10 He priketh<sup>6</sup> thurgh a fair forest,  
 Therinne is many a wilde best,  
 Ye, bothe bukke and hare ;  
 And, as he priketh north and est,  
 I telle it yow, him<sup>7</sup> hadde almost  
 15 Bitid<sup>8</sup> a sory care.<sup>9</sup>

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,  
 The lycorys<sup>10</sup> and cetewale,<sup>11</sup>  
 And many a clowe-gilofre<sup>12</sup> ;  
 And notemuge<sup>13</sup> to put in ale,  
 20 Whether it be moyste or stale,  
 Or for to leye in cofre.<sup>14</sup>

The briddes<sup>15</sup> singe, it is no nay,<sup>16</sup>  
 The sparhawk<sup>17</sup> and the papejay,<sup>18</sup>  
 That joye it was to here ;  
 25 The thrustlecok<sup>19</sup> made eek his lay,  
 The wodedowve<sup>20</sup> upon the spray  
 She sang ful loude and clere.

<sup>1</sup> unchaste man, debauchee

<sup>2</sup> flower of the bramble (dog-rose)

<sup>3</sup> hip (fruit of the dog-rose)

<sup>4</sup> got upon

<sup>5</sup> a kind of lance, probably rather short

<sup>6</sup> rides hard

<sup>7</sup> to him

<sup>8</sup> happened

<sup>9</sup> a grievous misfortune

<sup>10</sup> licorice

<sup>11</sup> zedoary (used in medicine  
 as a stimulant)

<sup>12</sup> clove

<sup>13</sup> nutmeg

<sup>14</sup> a box

<sup>15</sup> birds

<sup>16</sup> it cannot be denied

<sup>17</sup> sparrow-hawk

<sup>18</sup> parrot

<sup>19</sup> male thrush

<sup>20</sup> wood-dove





Til he so longe had riden and goon

That he fond, in a privee woon,<sup>1</sup>

The contree of Fairye

So wilde ;

5 For in that contree was thier noon

That to him dorste ryde or goon,<sup>2</sup>

Neither wyf ne childe,

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,<sup>3</sup>

(His name was Sir Olifaunt<sup>4</sup>),

10 A perilous man of dede.

He seyde : ' Child,<sup>5</sup> by Termagaunt,<sup>6</sup>

But-if<sup>7</sup> thou prike out of myn haunt,

Anon I slee<sup>8</sup> thy stede

With mace.

15 Heer is the queen of Fayerye,

With harpe and pype and simphonye,<sup>9</sup>

Dwelling in this place.'

The childe seyde : ' Also mote I thee,<sup>10</sup>

To-morwe wol I mete thee,

20 Whan I have myn armoure ;

And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,<sup>11</sup>

That thou shalt with this launcegay

Abyen it ful soure<sup>12</sup> ;

Thy mawe<sup>13</sup>

25 Shal I percen, if I may,

Er it be fully pryme of day,<sup>14</sup>

For heer thou shalt be slawe.<sup>15</sup>

Sir Thopas drow abak<sup>16</sup> ful faste ;

This geaunt at him stones caste

30 Out of a fel<sup>17</sup> staf-slinge<sup>18</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> secret retreat

<sup>2</sup> This line is supplied from  
an inferior MS.

<sup>3</sup> giant

<sup>4</sup> Elephant

<sup>5</sup> title of a young squire or  
knight

<sup>6</sup> a Saracen idol

<sup>7</sup> unless

<sup>8</sup> will slay

<sup>9</sup> a kind of tabor

<sup>10</sup> as I may thrive

<sup>11</sup> by my faith

<sup>12</sup> pay for it bitterly

<sup>13</sup> maw, stomach

<sup>14</sup> prime = 6-9 A.M.; fully  
prime = 9 A.M.

<sup>15</sup> slain

<sup>16</sup> drew back

<sup>17</sup> deadly

<sup>18</sup> sling fastened to a stick

But faire escapeth Child Thopas,  
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,<sup>1</sup>  
And thurgh his fair beringe.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale  
Merier than the nightingale, 5  
For now I wol yow roun<sup>2</sup>  
How Sir Thopas, with sydes smale,  
Priking over hil and dale,  
Is come agayn to toun<sup>e</sup>.

His merie men comanded he  
To make him bothe game<sup>3</sup> and glee, 10  
For nedes moste he fighte  
With a geaunt with hevedes<sup>4</sup> three,  
For paramour<sup>5</sup> and jolitee<sup>6</sup>  
Of oon<sup>7</sup> that shoon<sup>8</sup> ful brighte. 15

'Do<sup>9</sup> come,' he seyde, 'my min[i]strales  
And gestours,<sup>10</sup> for to tellen tales  
Anon, in<sup>11</sup> myn arminge;  
Of romances that been royales,  
Of popes and of cardinales, 20  
And eek of love-lykinge.'

They fette him first the swete wyn,  
And mede<sup>12</sup> eek in a maselyn,<sup>13</sup>  
And royal spicerye<sup>14</sup>  
Of gingebreed<sup>15</sup> that was ful fyn, 25  
And lycorys, and eek comyn,<sup>16</sup>  
With sugre that is so trye.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup> grace, favor  
<sup>2</sup> relate (*prop.* whisper)  
<sup>3</sup> sport  
<sup>4</sup> heads  
<sup>5</sup> love  
<sup>6</sup> amusement

<sup>7</sup> one  
<sup>8</sup> shone  
<sup>9</sup> cause to  
<sup>10</sup> story-tellers  
<sup>11</sup> during  
<sup>12</sup> mead

<sup>13</sup> maple bowl  
<sup>14</sup> mixture of spices  
<sup>15</sup> preserved ginger  
<sup>16</sup> cumin  
<sup>17</sup> choice

He dide<sup>1</sup> next his whyte lere<sup>2</sup>  
 Of clooth of lake<sup>3</sup> fyn and clere  
 A breech<sup>4</sup> and eek a sherte;  
 And next his sherte an aketoun,<sup>5</sup>  
 5 And over that an habergeoun,<sup>6</sup>  
 For<sup>7</sup> percinge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hauberk<sup>8</sup>  
 Was al ywroght of Jewes werk,  
 Ful strong it was of plate<sup>9</sup>;  
 10 And over that his cote-armour,<sup>10</sup>  
 As whyt as is a lily-flour,  
 In which he wol debate.<sup>11</sup>

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,  
 And therin was a bores heed,  
 15 A charbocle<sup>12</sup> bisyde;  
 And there he swoor, on ale and breed,  
 How that 'The geaunt shal be deed,  
 Bityde what bityde<sup>13</sup>!'

His jambeux<sup>14</sup> were of quirboilly,<sup>15</sup>  
 20 His swerdes shethe of yvory,  
 His helm of laton<sup>16</sup> bright;  
 His sadel was of rewel-boon<sup>17</sup>;  
 His brydel as the sonne shoon,  
 Or as the mone light.

25 His spere was of fyn ciprees,<sup>18</sup>  
 That bodeth werre, and nothing<sup>19</sup> pees,  
 The heed ful sharpe ygrounde;

<sup>1</sup> put on<sup>2</sup> flesh<sup>3</sup> linen<sup>4</sup> pair of breeches<sup>5</sup> short, sleeveless tunic<sup>6</sup> coat of mail<sup>7</sup> as protection against<sup>8</sup> hauberk, coat of mail<sup>9</sup> breastplate on the front of  
the hauberk (?)<sup>10</sup> a surcoat, not of metal<sup>11</sup> combat<sup>12</sup> carbuncle<sup>13</sup> happen what may happen<sup>14</sup> leg-pieces<sup>15</sup> boiled leather, dried very  
hard (*F. cuir bouilli*)<sup>16</sup> latten (metal compounded  
chiefly of copper and zinc)<sup>17</sup> walrus-ivory<sup>18</sup> cypress-wood (as associated  
with death)<sup>19</sup> by no means

His stede was al dappel-gray,  
 It gooth an ambel<sup>1</sup> in the way,  
 Ful softly and rounde<sup>2</sup>  
 In londe.

Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit<sup>3</sup>! 5  
 If ye wol any more of it,  
 To telle it wol I fonde.<sup>4</sup>

## II

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,<sup>6</sup>  
 Bothe knight and lady free,  
 And herkneth to my spelle<sup>6</sup>; 10  
 Of bataille and of chivalry,  
 And of ladyes love-drury,<sup>7</sup>  
 Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,<sup>8</sup>—  
 Of Horn Child and of Ypotys, 15  
 Of Bevis and Sir Gy,  
 Of Sir Libeux and Pleyndamour;  
 But Sir Thopas, he bereth the flour  
 Of royal chivalry.

<sup>1</sup> at an ambling pace<sup>2</sup> with an easy motion<sup>3</sup> a division of a song or poem<sup>4</sup> endeavor<sup>5</sup> for charity<sup>6</sup> story<sup>7</sup> courtship<sup>8</sup> renown

15. The romance of Horn appears in two forms, *King Horn* (see p. 11) and *Horn Childe*. Chaucer probably refers to *Horn Childe*.

The romance of *Sir Ypotis* has not much in common with the others mentioned here; in it the Emperor Adrian interrogates the child Ypotis as to matters of God's law.

16. *Sir Bevis of Hampton* and *Sir Guy of Warwick* are two of the longest and dullest of mediæval romances.

17. **Sir Libeux**: a romance entitled *Lybeaus Disconus* (*The Fair Unknown*). — **Pleyndamour**: no romance of this name is known; the original must have been in French.

His gode stede al he bistrood,  
 And forth upon his wey he glood<sup>1</sup>  
 As sparkle out of the bronde<sup>2</sup>;  
 Upon his crest he bar a tour,<sup>3</sup>  
 5 And therin stiked<sup>4</sup> a lily-flour;  
 God shilde his cors<sup>5</sup> fro shonde<sup>6</sup>!

And for he was a knight auntrous,<sup>7</sup>  
 He nolde<sup>8</sup> slepen in non hous,  
 But liggen<sup>9</sup> in his hode<sup>10</sup>;  
 10 His brighte helm was his wonger,<sup>11</sup>  
 And by him baiteth<sup>12</sup> his dextrer<sup>13</sup>  
 Of<sup>14</sup> herbes fyne and gode.

Himself drank water of the wel,  
 As did the knight Sir Percivel,  
 15 So worthy under wede,<sup>15</sup>  
 Til on a day ——

<sup>1</sup> glided  
<sup>2</sup> burning wood, brand  
<sup>3</sup> tower  
<sup>4</sup> fixed  
<sup>5</sup> body

<sup>6</sup> shame, disgrace  
<sup>7</sup> adventurous  
<sup>8</sup> would not  
<sup>9</sup> lie  
<sup>10</sup> hood

<sup>11</sup> pillow (cf. *wang*, cheek)  
<sup>12</sup> feeds  
<sup>13</sup> courser  
<sup>14</sup> on  
<sup>15</sup> well-looking in his armor

13. A reference to the romance, *Sir Perceval of Galles*.

# TALES

## CHAUCER, PRIORESS' TALE: THE LITTLE CHOIR-BOY

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note to *Sir Thopas*, p. 108.

### PROLOGUE

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous  
Is in this large worlde ysprad<sup>1</sup> (quod she);  
For noght only thy laude precious  
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,  
But by the mouth of children thy bountee  
Parfourned<sup>2</sup> is, for on the brest soukinge<sup>3</sup>  
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.<sup>4</sup>

a  
b  
c  
d  
e  
5

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may,  
Of thee, and of the whyte lily-flour  
Which that thee bar,<sup>5</sup> and is a mayde alway,  
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;  
Not that I may encresen hir honour;  
For she herself is honour, and the rote  
Of bountee, next hir Sone, and soules bote.<sup>6</sup>

Pearl 423-10

O moder mayde! O mayde moder free!  
O bush unbrent,<sup>7</sup> brenninge in Moysees sighte,  
That ravisedest<sup>8</sup> down fro the deitee,  
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the Goost<sup>9</sup> that in th' alighte,  
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,

15

<sup>1</sup> spread abroad

<sup>2</sup> perfected (cf. Ps. 8, 2, Vulg.; Matt. 21. 16)

<sup>3</sup> sucking

<sup>4</sup> praise

<sup>5</sup> bore

<sup>6</sup> healing, salvation

<sup>7</sup> unburnt (Exod. 3. 2)

<sup>8</sup> didst draw

<sup>9</sup> Spirit (Matt. 1. 18)

4. men of dignitee: such as monks or clergy in choirs.

Conceived was the Fadres Sapience,<sup>1</sup>  
 Help me to telle it in thy reverence !

- Lady ! thy bountee, thy magnificence,  
 Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee  
 5 Ther may no tonge expresse in no science ;  
 For somtyme, lady, er men praye to thee,  
 Thou goost biforn,<sup>2</sup> of thy benignitee,  
 And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,  
 To gyden us unto thy Sone so dere.
- 10 My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,  
 For to declare thy grete worthinesse,  
 That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,  
 But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,  
 That can unnethes<sup>3</sup> any word expresse,  
 15 Right so fare I ; and therfor I yow preye,  
 Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

#### THE TALE

- Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,  
 Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,<sup>4</sup>  
 Sustened by a lord of that contree  
 20 For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,  
 Hateful to Crist and to his companye ;  
 And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,  
 For it was free, and open at either ende.
- A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood  
 25 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were  
 Children an heep,<sup>5</sup> ycomen of Cristen blood,  
 That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer  
 Swich maner doctrine<sup>6</sup> as men used there,  
 This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,  
 30 As smale children doon in hir childehede.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. i. 24

<sup>2</sup> dost anticipate

<sup>3</sup> with difficulty

<sup>4</sup> ghetto, Jews' quarter

<sup>5</sup> number

<sup>6</sup> kind of learning



Among thise children was a widwes sone,  
 A litel clergeon,<sup>1</sup> seven yeer of age,  
 That day by day to scole was his wone,<sup>2</sup>  
 And eek also, wheras <sup>3</sup> he saugh th' image  
 Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage, 5  
 As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye  
 His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone ytaught  
 Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,  
 To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught, 10  
 For sely <sup>4</sup> child wol alday <sup>5</sup> sone lere <sup>6</sup> ;  
 But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,  
 Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,  
 For he so yong to Crist did reverence.

This litel child, his litel book lerninge, 15  
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer,<sup>7</sup>  
 He *Alma Redemptoris* herde singe,  
 As children lerned hir antiphoner <sup>8</sup> ;  
 And, as he dorste, he drough him ner <sup>9</sup> and ner,  
 And herkned ay the wordes and the note,<sup>10</sup> 20  
 Til he the firste vers coude <sup>11</sup> al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,  
 For he so yong and tendre was of age ;  
 But on a day his felaw gan he preye  
 T' expounden him this song in his langage, 25  
 Or telle him why this song was in usage ;

<sup>1</sup> choir-boy<sup>2</sup> custom<sup>3</sup> where<sup>4</sup> good<sup>5</sup> always<sup>6</sup> learn ; the line is a proverb<sup>7</sup> small prayer-book, from which  
children were taught to read<sup>8</sup> anthem-book<sup>9</sup> nearer<sup>10</sup> tune<sup>11</sup> knew

17. The eleventh-century hymn '*Alma Redemptoris mater, quæ pervia cœli*,' one of four antiphons addressed to the Virgin. It is used from the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Purification (February 2). It has been translated by Cardinal Newman and others.

This preyde he him to construe and declare  
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes<sup>1</sup> bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,  
Answerde him thus : ' This song, I have herd seye,  
5 Was maked of our blisful lady free,  
Hir to salue,<sup>2</sup> and eek hir for to preye  
To been our help and socour whan we deye.  
I can no more expounde in this matere ;  
I lerne song, I can<sup>3</sup> but smal grammere.'

10 ' And is this song maked in reverence  
Of Cristes moder ? ' seyde this innocent ;  
' Now certes, I wol do my diligence  
To conne<sup>4</sup> it al, er Cristemasse is went ;  
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,<sup>5</sup>  
15 And shal be beten thryës in an houre,  
I wol it conne, our lady to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,  
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,  
And than he song it wel and boldly  
20 Fro word to word, acording with the note ;  
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte —  
To scoleward<sup>6</sup> and homward whan he wente ;  
On Cristes moder set was his entente.<sup>7</sup>

As I have seyde, thurghout the Jewerye  
25 This litel child, as he cam to and fro,  
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye  
*O alma Redemptoris* evermo.<sup>8</sup>  
The swetnes hath his herte perced so  
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,  
30 He can nat stinte<sup>9</sup> of singing by the weye.

<sup>1</sup> knees  
<sup>2</sup> greet  
<sup>3</sup> know

<sup>4</sup> learn  
<sup>5</sup> disgraced  
<sup>6</sup> towards school

<sup>7</sup> thought, mind  
<sup>8</sup> evermore  
<sup>9</sup> cease

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,  
 That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,  
 Up swal,<sup>1</sup> and seide: 'O Hebraik peple, allas!  
 Is this to yow a thing that is honest,<sup>2</sup>  
 That swich a boy shal walken as him lest <sup>3</sup> 5  
 In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,<sup>4</sup>  
 Which is agayn your lawes <sup>5</sup> reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han <sup>6</sup> conspyred  
 This innocent out of this world to chace;  
 An homicyde therto han they hyred, 10  
 That in an aley <sup>7</sup> hadde a privee place;  
 And as the child gan forby for to pace,  
 This cursed Jew him hente <sup>8</sup> and heeld him faste,  
 And kitte <sup>9</sup> his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe <sup>10</sup> they him threwe 15  
 Wheras these Jewes purgen hir entraille.  
 O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,<sup>11</sup>  
 What may your yvel entente yow availle?  
 Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille;  
 And namely ther <sup>12</sup> th' onour of God shal sprede, 20  
 The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souted to <sup>13</sup> virginitee!  
 Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon <sup>14</sup>  
 The whyte Lamb celestial,' quod she,  
 'Of which the grete evangelist, Seint John, 25  
 In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon  
 Biforn this Lamb, and singe a song al newe,  
 That never, fleshly,<sup>15</sup> women they ne knewe.'

<sup>1</sup> swelled<sup>2</sup> honorable<sup>3</sup> it pleases<sup>4</sup> to such purport<sup>5</sup> due to your law<sup>6</sup> have<sup>7</sup> alley<sup>8</sup> seized<sup>9</sup> cut<sup>10</sup> outhouse<sup>11</sup> made up of new Herods<sup>12</sup> especially where<sup>13</sup> confirmed in<sup>14</sup> without ceasing; cf. Rev. 14. 4<sup>15</sup> carnally

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night  
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght ;  
 For which, as sone as it was dayes light,  
 With face pale of <sup>1</sup> drede and bisy thoght,  
 5 She hath at scole and elleswher him soght,  
 Til finally she gan so fer espye <sup>2</sup>  
 That he last seyn was in the Jewerye.

With modres <sup>3</sup> pitee in hir brest enclosed,  
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,  
 10 To every place wher she hath supposed  
 By lyklihede hir litel child to finde ;  
 And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde  
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte —  
 Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte.

She frayneth <sup>4</sup> and she preyeth pitously  
 To every Jew that dwelte in thilke <sup>5</sup> place,  
 To telle hir if hir child wente oght forby. <sup>6</sup>  
 They seyde, ' Nay ' ; but Jesu, of his grace,  
 Yaf <sup>7</sup> in hir thought, inwith <sup>8</sup> a litel space,  
 20 That in that place after hir sone she cryde  
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude  
 By mouth of innocents, lo heer <sup>9</sup> thy might !  
 This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,  
 25 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,  
 Ther <sup>10</sup> he with throte ycorven <sup>11</sup> lay upright,  
 He *Alma Redemptoris* gan to singe  
 So loude that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,  
 30 In coomen, for to wondre upon this thing,

<sup>1</sup> from<sup>2</sup> find out<sup>3</sup> mother's<sup>4</sup> asks questions<sup>5</sup> that<sup>6</sup> had chanced to go by<sup>7</sup> gave<sup>8</sup> within<sup>9</sup> here<sup>10</sup> where<sup>11</sup> cut, slashed

And hastily they for the provost<sup>1</sup> sente ;  
 He cam anon, withouten taryng,  
 And herieth<sup>2</sup> Crist that is of heven King,  
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde ;  
 And, after that, the Jewes leet he binde.<sup>3</sup> 5

This child with pitous lamentacioun  
 Uptaken was, singing his song alway ;  
 And with honour of greet processiou  
 They carien him unto the nexte<sup>4</sup> abbay.  
 His moder swowning by the bere lay ; 10  
 Unnethe might the peple that was there  
 This newe Rachel<sup>5</sup> bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon<sup>6</sup>  
 This provost dooth<sup>7</sup> thise Jewes for to sterve<sup>8</sup>  
 That of this mordre wiste, and that anon ; 15  
 He nolde no swich cursednesse<sup>9</sup> observe.<sup>10</sup>  
 Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve ;  
 Therfor with wilde hors<sup>11</sup> he dide hem drawe,<sup>12</sup>  
 And after that he heng hem<sup>13</sup> by the lawe.

Upon his bere ay lyth<sup>14</sup> this innocent 20  
 Biforn the chief auter,<sup>15</sup> whyl masse laste,  
 And after that, the abbot with his covent<sup>16</sup>  
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste ;  
 And whan they holy water on him caste,  
 Yet spak this child, whan spreynd<sup>17</sup> was holy water, 25  
 And song : *O alma Redemptoris mater !*

This abbot, which that was an holy man —  
 As monkes been, or elles oghten be —

<sup>1</sup> chief magistrate<sup>2</sup> praises<sup>3</sup> he caused to be bound<sup>4</sup> nearest<sup>5</sup> Cf. Matt. 2. 18<sup>6</sup> each one<sup>7</sup> causes<sup>8</sup> die<sup>9</sup> wickedness<sup>10</sup> favor<sup>11</sup> horses<sup>12</sup> had them drawn<sup>13</sup> them<sup>14</sup> lies<sup>15</sup> altar<sup>16</sup> monks of the convent<sup>17</sup> sprinkled

This yonge child to conjure he bigan,  
 And seyde: 'O dere child, I halse<sup>1</sup> thee,  
 In vertu of the holy Trinitee,  
 Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,  
 5 Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge<sup>2</sup>?'

'My throte is cut unto my nekke-boon,'  
 Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,<sup>3</sup>  
 I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon;  
 But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,  
 10 Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde;  
 And, for the worship of his moder dere,  
 Yet may I singe *O alma* loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,  
 I lovede alwey, as after my conninge<sup>4</sup>;  
 15 And whan that I my lyf sholde<sup>5</sup> forlete,  
 To me she cam, and bad me for to singe  
 This antem<sup>6</sup> verrailly in my deyinge,  
 As ye han herd; and, whan that I had songe,  
 Me thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot<sup>7</sup> certeyn  
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,  
 Til fro my tonge oftaken is the greyn;  
 And afterward thus seyde she to me:  
 "My litel child, now wol I fecche thee  
 25 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake;  
 Be nat agast,<sup>8</sup> I wol thee nat forsake."

This holy monk — this abbot, him mene I —  
 His tonge outcaughte, and took away the greyn,  
 And he yaf up the goost ful softly.

<sup>1</sup> implore<sup>2</sup> as it appears to me<sup>3</sup> nature<sup>4</sup> within the limits of my knowledge<sup>5</sup> ought to have<sup>6</sup> anthem<sup>7</sup> must<sup>8</sup> afraid

And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,  
 His salte teres triked doun as reyn,  
 And gruf<sup>1</sup> he fil al plat<sup>2</sup> upon the grounde,  
 And stille he lay as he had been ybounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement 5  
 Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere;  
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,  
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,  
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere  
 Enclosen they his litel body swete; 10  
 Ther<sup>3</sup> he is now, God leve<sup>4</sup> us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln,<sup>5</sup> slayn also  
 With<sup>6</sup> cursed Jewes, as it is notable —  
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago —  
 Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable, 15  
 That, of his mercy, God so merciabe  
 On us his grete mercy multiplye,  
 For reverence of his moder Marye.

## THE IMPRISONED WIFE

*The Seven Sages of Rome*, from which this story is taken, is the European counterpart of the Oriental *Book of Sindibād*, ultimately, according to general scholarly belief, of Indian origin. *The Book of Sindibād* exists in a number of versions (Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Persian, etc.), and the European *Seven Sages* in many more, the latter being found in one or more forms in almost every language of Europe. As late as 1892 a Lithuanian version was printed at Plymouth, Pennsylvania.

How the Oriental outline of the story was carried westward is a matter of conjecture. Since only four of the fifteen tales in the European collection are similar to those in any Eastern versions, it has been supposed that the transmission was probably oral, and a crusader returning from the Holy Land has been suggested as the possible transmitter. In any case, the most important element borrowed from the East is the frame or general plan of a series of tales told by seven wise men in defending a young prince against the accusations

<sup>1</sup> face downward, groveling  
<sup>2</sup> flat

<sup>3</sup> where  
<sup>4</sup> grant

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Skeat's note  
<sup>6</sup> by

of the queen, his stepmother, and the tales told by the queen in reply. Like the frames of *The Arabian Nights*, of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and of more modern groups, down to Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, this serves not only as a device by which to unite a number of tales, but also to account in some measure for the general character of the tales themselves.

The following selection is from the Cottonian manuscript of the Middle English version (British Museum Cotton Galba E. 9). This manuscript (apparently copied from a lost earlier one) has been dated as of the first third of the fifteenth century. For a full discussion of dates and other details, and *The Seven Sages of Rome* in general, see the edition by Killis Campbell (Ginn, 1907), from which our text (including lines 3236-3726 of the poem), with certain emendations and changes of punctuation, is taken.

Among the most interesting analogues and variants of our *Inclusa*-story (which is not one of those found in the Oriental versions) are Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus* (cf. Act 2); Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* 1. 22; *The Thousand and One Nights*, ed. Habicht, 11. 140; Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* 1. 281.

- In þe kingdom of Hungary  
Wond<sup>1</sup> a nobil knyght whylom,  
A rightwis man and whise of dome.<sup>2</sup>  
He dremyd þus opon a nyght,  
5        þat he lufed a lady bryght,  
Bot he ne wist in what contre  
þat þe lady myght funden be.  
Him thoght he knew hir wele bi kinde,  
And wele he hopid he sold hir finde.  
10        þat same time dremyd þat ladi bryght,  
And thoght þat sho sold luf a knight;  
Bot sho wist noght of what land,  
Ne in whate stede<sup>3</sup> he was dweland,<sup>4</sup>  
Ne his name knew sho nathing;  
15        þarfore made sho grete murnyng.  
      Opun þe morn, þe stori sayse,  
þe knight toke horses and hernays,<sup>5</sup>  
And went to seke þat lady bryght  
þat him dremyd of þat nyght.  
20        þat jornay unto him was hard,

<sup>1</sup> dwelt  
<sup>2</sup> judgment

<sup>3</sup> place  
<sup>4</sup> dwelling

<sup>5</sup> armor



For he wist noght whederward  
 þat he sold tak þe redy way ;  
 þarfore he drowped<sup>1</sup> night and day.

So he travelde monethes thre,  
 And no signe of hyr kowth he se ;  
 Bot wele in hert he hoped ay  
 þat he sold hir se sum day.

So fer þe knyght his way had nomen  
 þat into Hungeri es he cumen.  
 þare he findes a faire castele  
 Bi þe se-syde, wroght ful wele ;  
 þarin stode a towre ful hee ;  
 Fairer saw he never with ee.

An erl wond in þat castele  
 þat aght<sup>2</sup> þe lordship ilka dele.

With him he had a worthy wife,  
 þe fairest lady þat had lyfe.  
 þe erl was jeluse of þat lady ;  
 He sperid<sup>3</sup> hir in þe toure forþi<sup>4</sup> ;

Sho might noght out by day ne night,  
 To speke with swier<sup>5</sup> ne with knight.

In þat land was were<sup>6</sup> ful strang,  
 Of kinges and lordes, þat lasted lang.

þare come ridand þat nobil knight,  
 þat so had soght þe lady bright ;

He loked up unto þe toure,  
 And saw þe lady, white so<sup>7</sup> flowre,  
 Lig<sup>8</sup> in a window barred with stele.

þan in his hert he wist ful wele  
 þat þis lady was þe same

þat he had so dremyd of at hame.  
 He loked up unto þe toure,

And merily sang he of amowre.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> drooped

<sup>2</sup> owned, possessed

<sup>3</sup> bolted, locked

<sup>4</sup> for that reason, therefore

<sup>5</sup> squire

<sup>6</sup> war

<sup>7</sup> as

<sup>8</sup> lie

<sup>9</sup> love

And when sho herd him so bigyn,  
 Unnethes might þat ladi blyn <sup>1</sup>  
 Þat sho ne had cald him hir unto ;  
 Bot for hir lord sho durst noght do.  
 5 He sat biside under a tre,  
 At þe ches, <sup>2</sup> a knyght and he.  
 Þis knyght percayved þe erl þare.  
 Unto þe lady he mened <sup>3</sup> na mare ;  
 Bot til <sup>4</sup> þe erl he rides ful right,  
 10 And of his palfray down he lyght.  
 On his kne sone he him set,  
 And þe erl ful faire he gret ;  
 ' Sir Erl,' he said, ' I am a knight,  
 Out of my cuntre cumen for fight ;  
 15 Þeder ogayn dar I noght gane,  
 For a knight þare have I slane ;  
 Þarfore, sir, if þi willes be,  
 Þus am I cumen to dwel with þe.  
 My famen er ful steren <sup>5</sup> and stout ;  
 20 Þai have destroyed my landes about.'  
 Þe erl said : ' So mot I þe,  
 Right so fares my famen with me ;  
 So þat I have no socoure  
 Bot þis castel and þis toure.  
 25 Þarfore, sir, þou ert welkum here ;  
 Of swilk a man have I mystere <sup>6</sup> ;  
 And if þou wil me help trewly,  
 I sal þe gif grete mede forthy.'  
 ' Ȝis, sir,' he sayd, ' at my power,  
 30 Ay whils I my armes bere.'  
 With þe erl þus dwels þe knight,  
 Al for luf of þe lady bryght.  
 Þar was na knight þat bare shelde  
 þat might so wele his wapen welde ;

<sup>1</sup> restrain herself  
<sup>2</sup> chess

<sup>3</sup> made moan  
<sup>4</sup> to

<sup>5</sup> stern  
<sup>6</sup> need

Thorgh strenkith of hand and Godes grace  
He overcome al þe erles fase.<sup>1</sup>

þe erl him lufed and honord þan  
Mare þan any oþer man ;  
He made hym steward of al his land,  
And bad þe men bow til hys hand.

5

Sone efter þat, opon a day,  
þe knyght allane went him to play,  
Under þe toure whare þe lady was ;  
þare he made him grete solace.  
þe lady in a wyndow lay,  
And saw þe knyght allane him play ;  
A letter sone sho kest hym tyll,  
Wharby he might wit<sup>2</sup> al hir will.

10

þe knight toke up þe parchemyne,  
And red þe Franche ful fayre and fyne ;  
And alsone als he red it had,  
Was he never in hert so glad ;  
By þat letter þe knight wele kend  
þat his travayl was cumen till end.  
Ful sare him langed to hyr at<sup>3</sup> ga,  
Prevely, withowten ma ;  
And wele he saw þat, by na gyn,<sup>4</sup>  
Allane to hir myght he noght wyn<sup>6</sup> ;  
þar was bot a dur and a way,  
And þarof bare þe erl þe kay.

15

20

25

So on a day, with mylde worde,  
þe knyght spekes unto hys lord,  
And said : ' Sir, of þi gude grace,  
I pray þe to gif me a place  
Bifore þis towre, þat I may big<sup>6</sup>  
A litel place in for to lig,  
And þat I mai my wonyng have  
At myne ese if ge vowchesave.'

30

<sup>1</sup> foes  
<sup>2</sup> know

<sup>3</sup> to  
<sup>4</sup> device

<sup>5</sup> succeed in going  
<sup>6</sup> build

þe erl answerd him ful sone :

' Sir, þi wil sal al be done ;

Big þe a hows at þi lykyng.'

þe knight him thanked of þat thing.

5 þe knight gat masons many ane,

And gert<sup>1</sup> þam hew ful faire frestane ;

A nobil hows þare gert he make

Ful sone for þe lady sake.

When it was wroght als it sold be,

10 Bath of stane and als<sup>2</sup> of tre,

þan thocht he ever by whatkyn<sup>3</sup> gin

þat he moght to þe lady win.

Biside þare, in anoþer town,

Was þare cumen a new masown

15 þat soght had fra fer cuntre ;

Sotiler man might none be.

þe knyght unto þat mason sent ;

His messangers wigh[t]ly<sup>4</sup> war<sup>5</sup> went.

þai broght him to þe knyght in hy ;

20 He hailed<sup>6</sup> him ful curtaisly.

þe knyght said : ' Mai I traist on þe,

For to tel my prevete

þat I have aghteld<sup>7</sup> for to do ?'

þe mason sware grete athes him to

25 þat he sold [do] whatsom he wolde,

And never tel man on þis molde.<sup>8</sup>

He said : ' In þis toure, I tel þe,

Wons a lady þat lufes me,

And I luf hir wele at my might ;

30 Bot I may, nowþer day ne night,

Til hir win ne with hir speke ;

þarfore a hole behoves þe breke

In þis towre ful prevely,

þat no man wit bot þou and I ;

<sup>1</sup> caused

<sup>2</sup> also

<sup>3</sup> what sort of

<sup>4</sup> speedily

<sup>5</sup> were

<sup>6</sup> saluted

<sup>7</sup> purposed

<sup>8</sup> earth

þat I 'may cum in prevete  
 Unto þe lady and sho to me.'  
 'Sertes, sir,' said þe mason sone,  
 'Als þou has said, it sal be done.'  
 Hastily he takes hys tole,<sup>1</sup> 5  
 And in þe toure he made a hole,  
 þat þe knight might cum þe ladi untill,  
 Night and day, at þaire owyn will.  
 When þe lady wist of þis,  
 Hir .thoght hir hert was ful of blis. 10  
 þe knight quit<sup>2</sup> wele þe servise  
 Of þe mason for his quayntyse<sup>3</sup>:  
 He slogh him sone, þat ilk[e] day,  
 For fered<sup>4</sup> þat he sold oght say.  
 And efterward, ful sone onane,<sup>5</sup> 15  
 Into þe toure þe knight gan gane;  
 Thurgh þe hole gan he pas,  
 Til he come whare þe lady was.  
 Bitwene þam was grete joy and blis;  
 In armes ful curtaysly þai kys. 20  
 Wele sho wist it was þat knyght  
 þat sho had dremyd of anyght.  
 Sho said: 'Sir, þou art welkum here.'  
 He said: 'Gramercy,<sup>6</sup> lady dere.'  
 To hir he talde of his dremeing, 25  
 And sho him talde of þe same thing;  
 And when þai wist it was sertayn,  
 Ayther of oþer was ful fayn.  
 Sho lete him wirk þare al his will;  
 And seþen he said þe lady untyll: 30  
 'Dame, I dar no lenger byde,  
 For herein may þou me noght hide.  
 And þarfore, dame, have now goday;  
 I sal cum ogayn when I may.'

<sup>1</sup> tool  
<sup>2</sup> repaid

<sup>3</sup> cunning, skill  
<sup>4</sup> fear

<sup>5</sup> at once  
<sup>6</sup> many thanks

þe lady, at þaire departyng,<sup>1</sup>  
 Gaf þe knight a gude gold ring,  
 And said : ' Sir, I pray to þe,  
 When þou sese þis, thinke on me.'  
 5 At<sup>2</sup> þe lady þe ryng he tase,  
 And graythly<sup>3</sup> til þe hole he gase;  
 þe ring he put his fynger on,  
 And doun ògayn he hied him sone  
 Thurgh þe hole was made of stane :  
 10 A meri man þe knight was ane.  
 þe knyght went unto þe hall,  
 Unto þe erl and his menge<sup>4</sup> all;  
 þe erl gert him sit ful nere,  
 And to hym made he meri chere.  
 15 Als þai spak of divers thing,  
 þe erl saw his whives ring  
 Opon þe knyghtes fynger bare;  
 He had wonder how it was þare.  
 He wist wele þar was none slike,<sup>5</sup>  
 20 Ne þat none might be made so like;  
 And ever he thinkes in hert styll  
 How ani man might come her till.  
 Styl he held al in his thoght;  
 Unto þe knyght he sayd right noght,  
 25 Bot up he rase bilyve onane;  
 Unto his whife he thoght to gane,  
 For to wit whare hir ring was.  
 þe knight perzayved al þe case;  
 He hies als fast als he may  
 30 Tite<sup>6</sup> until hys preve way.  
 þe erl hies to þe lady fre,  
 Bot þe knyght come lang or<sup>7</sup> he;  
 Unto þe lady þe ring he cast,

<sup>1</sup> parting, separation<sup>2</sup> from<sup>3</sup> quickly<sup>4</sup> retinue<sup>5</sup> such<sup>6</sup> quickly<sup>7</sup> before

And doun ogayn he hies him fast.  
 Þe lady has þe ring up hent;  
 Sho wist ful wele þan how it went;  
 Sho did it in hir purs in horde,<sup>1</sup>  
 And sone þarefter come hir lorde, 5  
 And with gude chere he gan hir glade,  
 And asked hyr what chere sho made.  
 Sho said sho myght have no solace,  
 So was sho presond in þat place  
 Fra þe sight of alkins<sup>2</sup> men: 10  
 'How may I any kumforth ken?'  
 'Dame,' said þe erl ful sone,  
 'For grete derenes es yt done,  
 And for I wil nane change þi thocht.'  
 Þe lady said: 'Sir, thinkes it noght; 15  
 Þar es no knight in no cuntre  
 Þat might change my luf fra þe;  
 And sen ge wil þat it be þus,  
 At zowre lyking habide me bus,<sup>3</sup>  
 For oþer cumforth kepe<sup>4</sup> I nane 20  
 Bot of God and of zow allane.'  
 Þe erl thought zit on oþer thing.  
 'Dame,' he said, 'whare es þi ring  
 Þat I þe gaf of gold ful fyne?  
 Lat me se it, leman myne.' 25  
 Þe lady answerd hym unto:  
 'Sir, what sal ge þarwith do?  
 Wene ge þat it be oway  
 For<sup>5</sup> I were it noght ilk day?  
 Nai, sir, dredes zow never a dele, 30  
 For I sal zeme<sup>6</sup> it wonder wele.'  
 'Dame,' he sayd, 'for luf of me,  
 A sight þarof þat I might se;  
 And, sertes, I ask it for none ill.'

1 hoard  
 2 of every kind

3 it behooves me to abide  
 4 care for

5 because  
 6 care for

Sho said: 'Sir, gladly at ȝowre will.'  
 Out of hir purs þe ring sho toke;  
 Þe lord gan graythly on hir loke.  
 'Lo! sir,' sho said, 'here is my ring.'

5        Þe erl had mervail of þis thing,  
 Þat it was [so] like, by syght,  
 Þe ring þat he saw of his knight;  
 Bot wele he hopid<sup>1</sup> and weterly<sup>2</sup>  
 Þat nane might win to þe lady,  
 10        Ne þat hir ring was noght hir fra,  
 Bot þat þai had bene like, þai twa.

      He was wele solast of þat sight,  
 And þare he dwelled al þat night;  
 Þe lady bi hirself oft smyled,  
 15        And thoght þat he was wele bigild.  
 Opon þe morn þe knyght up rase,  
 And to þe kirk graythly he gase,  
 Goddes werkes þare for to wirk.  
 Seþen com þe erl unto þe kyrk;  
 20        A mes<sup>3</sup> ful sone þan gert he sing,  
 In honowre of oure Hevyn-kyng.  
 Þe erl sent þan hastily  
 Efter þe knyght of Hungery;  
 Þe knyght come sone þe erl untill.  
 25        Þe erl said: 'Sir, if [þat] þou will,  
 Þou sal wend to wod with me,  
 At<sup>4</sup> hunt, and solace for to se.'

      Þe knyght answerd wordes hende<sup>5</sup>:  
 'Sir, to wod may I noght wende,  
 30        For me es cumen new tipand<sup>6</sup>  
 Þat makes me ful wele lykand,<sup>7</sup>  
 Fra my cuntre withowten lese<sup>8</sup> —  
 Þat my frendes haves made mi pese

<sup>1</sup> thought  
<sup>2</sup> surely  
<sup>3</sup> mass

<sup>4</sup> to  
<sup>5</sup> courteous  
<sup>6</sup> tidings

<sup>7</sup> pleased  
<sup>8</sup> deception



For þat knight þat I have slayn ;  
 And of þir <sup>1</sup> tipandes am I fayn.  
 And, sir, þir <sup>2</sup> tipandes es me broght  
 Bi my leman, þat has me soght  
 Heder out of myne awin cuntre. 5  
 Þarfore, sir, if ȝowre wil be,  
 Þis day I pray ȝow with me ete,  
 And se my leman at þe mete,  
 And for to make cumforth hir till.  
 Þe erl said : ' Gladly I will 10  
 Do al þe comforth þat I can  
 Bath to þe and þi leman ;  
 Whenso þou will, send efter me,  
 And smertly <sup>3</sup> sal I cum to þe.'  
 Þan went þe erl to his solace, 15  
 Unto þe wod to mak his chace;  
 And þe knight went sone onane,  
 And ordand <sup>4</sup> mete and drink gud wane.<sup>5</sup>  
 His hows he dight <sup>6</sup> on gude aray ;  
 And smertly þan he toke þe way 20  
 Unto þe lady faire and bright,  
 And gert þat sho war gayly dyght  
 In gold garmentes, richely wroght,  
 And talde hir al how he has thoght  
 Þat ilk day sho and hir lord 25  
 Sold bath togeder et <sup>7</sup> of a bord,  
 And how hir lord sold understand  
 Þat sho war cumen out of fer land.  
 Down he broght hir til his hows  
 Hamely,<sup>8</sup> als sho war his spows ; 30  
 Bot hir garmentes war al new,  
 Þat no man in þat cuntre knew.  
 Opon hir fingers gert he done

<sup>1</sup> these<sup>2</sup> MS. þis<sup>3</sup> quickly ; MS. smeretly<sup>4</sup> ordered<sup>5</sup> quantity<sup>6</sup> fitted out<sup>7</sup> eat<sup>8</sup> familiarly

Gold ringes ful many one ;  
 Hir hed was gayly dubed <sup>1</sup> and dyght  
 With gerlands al of gold ful bright ;  
 So out of kenyng <sup>2</sup> he hir broght  
 5 þat hir lord þan knew hir noght.  
     Fra hunting come þe erl in hi <sup>3</sup> ;  
 þe knyght him keped <sup>4</sup> ful curtaisly,  
 And til his hows he led him þan  
 For to ett with his leman.  
 10 Redy was ordaynd and dyght <sup>5</sup>  
 Mete and drink for mani a knight.  
 Unto þe bord þe erl es set,  
 And his whif, with him to et.  
 þe knight said : ' þis es my leman ;  
 15 Makes hir comforth if ȝe can.'  
 þe erl bad sho sold be blith,  
 And he biheld hir mony a syth <sup>6</sup> ;  
 And wonder in his hert had he  
 How þat it so myght be  
 20 þat any lady in þis life  
 Might be so like his owin wyfe.  
 þe lady praied him blith to be,  
 And ett gladly, par charite.  
 þe erl bad hir also be glad,  
 25 And loked on hir als he war mad ;  
 Bot he thoght þe towre was so strang  
 þat þare myght no man do him wrang,  
 Ne þat his whif might noght cum down ;  
 þarfore trowed he no tresowne.  
 30 He thoght : ' Oft sythes bifalles slike,<sup>6</sup>  
 þat mani wemen er oþer like,  
 Als was þe ring of gold fyne  
 þat I wend wele had bene myne.'

<sup>1</sup> decorated  
<sup>2</sup> recognition

<sup>3</sup> haste  
<sup>4</sup> received

<sup>5</sup> time  
<sup>6</sup> happen such things

þus þe erl left all his care ;  
 Of þis mater he thinkes no mare.  
 þan said þe knight on þis manere  
 Unto þe erl : ' Sir, mase<sup>1</sup> gude chere.'  
 þe erl said : ' Sir, I þe pray, 5  
 þe sertan soth þat þou me say  
 Whepin<sup>2</sup> es þis faire lady  
 þat þou has set at met me by ?'  
 þe knight said : ' Sir, bi my lewte,<sup>3</sup>  
 Sho es cumen fra myne awyn cuntre ; 10  
 Sho es my leman þat has me soght,  
 And new tithandes sho haves me broght :  
 Mi pese es made for evermare  
 For þe knight þat I slogh þare,  
 So þat I may wend hardily 15  
 Hame ogayn my pese to cri ;  
 And þarfore wil I with hir wende,  
 For to speke with ilka frende.'  
 ' Sir, sekerly,' said þe erl þan,  
 ' Me think þou has a fayre leman.' 20  
 Whan þai had etyn and dronken inoghe,  
 þai toke up mete, and clathes drogh.<sup>4</sup>  
 When þe erl liked to gane,  
 He toke leve at<sup>5</sup> þe knyghtes leman ;  
 And hastily when he was went, 25  
 þe knight and þe lady gent  
 Sone did of<sup>6</sup> þe riche aray  
 þat þai had done on<sup>7</sup> þat day ;  
 Hir awyn robe sone did þai on,  
 And dighted hir als sho was won.<sup>8</sup> 30  
 And þan sho toke þe preve sty<sup>9</sup>  
 Into þe toure ful hastily ;

<sup>1</sup> make  
<sup>2</sup> whence  
<sup>3</sup> loyalty

<sup>4</sup> cleared the table  
<sup>5</sup> of  
<sup>6</sup> took off

<sup>7</sup> put on  
<sup>8</sup> accustomed  
<sup>9</sup> ascent

þe knight gan playnly with hir pas  
 Until sho in hir chamber was.  
 And unnethes was þe knyght went out  
 When þe erl was gane obowt<sup>1</sup>;  
 5 Unto þe toure he takes þe way  
 Als hastily als ever he may;  
 þare he findes his lady,  
 Kaped him ful curtaysely.

þan was þe erl in hert ful glad  
 10 When he wist þat he hir had.  
 Him thocht git<sup>2</sup> sho was like fully  
 To þe lady þat sat him by.  
 þare þe erl dwelled al nyght,  
 And laiked<sup>3</sup> him with his lady bright.  
 15 þat night þai wrought what þaire wils ware;  
 And on þat wise<sup>4</sup> þai met na mare.  
 Herkens now, how it bifell:  
 On þis maner stode þat castell,  
 þat þe se ran fast byside;  
 20 Many gode shippes gan þare bide.  
 Whils þe erl of grete honowre  
 Lay with þe lady in þe towre,  
 þe knight ordand a ship of sail,  
 And gert bere þeder gude vetaille<sup>5</sup>;  
 25 Al his gode<sup>6</sup> þeder gert he bere,  
 Gold and silver and oþer gere.

On þe morn þe erl forth gase,  
 And left his lady in þat place.  
 Until þe kirk þan went he sone  
 30 And herd his mes als he was wone;  
 And when he to þe kirk was gane,  
 þe knyght went to þe towre onane,  
 And down he broght þe fayre lady

<sup>1</sup> had started to go  
<sup>2</sup> yet, nevertheless

<sup>3</sup> sported  
<sup>4</sup> in that manner

<sup>5</sup> provisions  
<sup>6</sup> property

Into his hows ful prevely.  
 And of <sup>1</sup> þai toke þe clathes sone  
 Þat þe lady had hir on ;  
 Þai dight hir in þe garmentes gay  
 Þat sho had on þat oþer day ; 5  
 With gerlandes and with gleterand <sup>2</sup> thing  
 Was sho made out of knawying.  
 When al was done als it sold be,  
 Unto þe erl, his lord, went he.  
 ' Sir,' he sayd, ' I wald þe pray 10  
 Of a ded þis ilk day :  
 Þat þou wil gif me with þi hand  
 My leman, or <sup>3</sup> I pas þi lond,  
 Þat I mai wed hir to my whife ;  
 For with hir wil I lede my lyfe.' 15  
 He sayd he thoght to wed hir þan  
 Þat had byfore ben his leman,  
 For luf of God and als for drede,  
 And for he sold þe better spede.  
 Þe erl said : ' þat es gude scill,' <sup>4</sup> 20  
 And als þou sais, syr, do I will.'  
 Sone þe erl cals knightes twa,  
 And bad þam sone þat þai sold ga  
 And feche þe lady unto þe kirk.  
 Þai war redy his wil to wirk ; 25  
 To kirk þai led þat faire lady.  
 A preste was revist <sup>5</sup> hastily.  
 Þe erl come with meri chere,  
 Omang al þat folk in fere. <sup>6</sup>  
 His owin lady he toke bylive 30  
 And gaf þe knyght until his wive ;  
 Þe prest þam weddes swith sone.  
 And als tite als þe mes was done,

1 off  
2 glittering

<sup>3</sup> ere  
<sup>4</sup> reason

<sup>5</sup> hurried thither  
<sup>6</sup> in company, together

þan was þare made grete menestrelsy ;  
 And þe knight and his lady  
 Went þam forth with grete solas  
 To þe ship whare his godes in was.  
 5 þe erl went with þam þartill ;  
 þe knight went yn with ful gude will.  
 þe lady stode still on þe sand ;  
 þe erl toke hir by þe hand,  
 And bad þe knyght sold hir take,  
 10 Evermare to be his make.  
 þare þe knyght toke þe lady,  
 And said to þe erl : ' Sir, gramercy  
 Of <sup>1</sup> þis and of <sup>1</sup> al oþer grace.'  
 þus of þe erl hys leve he tase ;  
 15 þe wind blew, þai went þaire way.  
 þus lost þe erl his whife for ay ;  
 He gaf hir þus þe knyght to wed ;  
 þarfore ful sari life he led.  
 When þe knight was went with þe lady,  
 20 þe erl wendes hame hastily ;  
 Until þe toure þe way he tase,  
 To tel his lady how it was,  
 And how he had his knyght cunvayd <sup>2</sup> ;  
 He trowed noght how he was bitraid.  
 25 Until his toure þus wendes he right,  
 For to speke with his lady bright.  
 Into þe chamber <sup>3</sup> gan he ga,  
 And loked about, bath to and fra ;  
 He saw no syght of his lady ;  
 30 þarfore sone he wex sary.  
 Of hir cowth he nothing here ;  
 þan he wepid with sari chere.  
 Unto himself he gan him mene <sup>4</sup>  
 þat al was soth als he had sene.

<sup>1</sup> for<sup>2</sup> accompanied<sup>3</sup> MS. chameber<sup>4</sup> lament

þan wist he it was his lady  
 þat at þe mete was set him by.  
 To wax wise þan he bigan;  
 þarfore blamed him moni a man.

## DAME SIRITH

*Dame Sirith* is preserved in Digby MS. 86, which has been assigned to a date between 1272 and 1283, but by some as late as 1300.

With respect to the introduction of such fabliaux into England, Jusserand says (*Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 225): "'Merry England" became acquainted with every form of French mirth; she imitated French chansons, and gave a place in her literature to French fabliaux. Nothing could be less congenial to the Anglo-Saxon race than the spirit of the fabliaux. This spirit, however, was acclimatized in England; and, like several other products of the French mind, was grafted on the original stock. The tree thus bore fruit which would never have ripened as it did, without the Conquest. Such are the works of Chaucer, of Swift perhaps, and of Sterne. The most comic and *rusqué* stories, those same stories meant to raise a laugh which we have seen old women tell at parlor windows, in order to cheer recluse anchoresses, were put into English verse, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Thus we find under an English form such stories as the tale of "La Chienne qui pleure" [*Dame Sirith*], etc.

With respect to *Dame Sirith*, Ker says (*English Literature: Medieval*, p. 172): "This is far above the ordinary level of such things; it is a shameful practical joke, but there is more in it than this; the character of Dame Sirith, in her machinations to help the distressed lover of his neighbour's wife, is such as belongs to comedy and to satire, not to the ordinary vulgar "merry tale.""

The germ of the story has been traced back to India, where a belief in metempsychosis is prevalent, and thence passes on to the Persian (*Book of Sindibad*), the Arabic (see Clouston's *Book of Sindibad*, pp. 162 ff.) and the Hebrew (*Mischle Sindbad*, tr. Cassel, pp. 268 ff.). About 1100 it is found in the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alphonsus, a converted Spanish Jew, with which compare *Gesta Romanorum*, chap. 28 (of the Latin). The English version here printed bears a rather close resemblance to that in the Greek *Syntipas* (ed. Eberhard, *Fabulae Romanenses Graece Conscrip̄tae*, Leipzig, 1879). For other versions, and the transmission of the story in general, see Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* 1. 103-5; Elsner, *Untersuchungen zu dem Mittelenglischen Fabliau 'Dame Siriz'*, Berlin, 1877; McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (Boston, 1913), pp. xxi-xxxvii, 83-5.

This tale has many points of resemblance with a fragmentary interlude printed below (pp. 477-80). It has been conjectured that both have a common

source in an interlude now lost (see Heuser, in *Anglia*, Vol. 30, and McKnight, pp. xxxviii-ix).

The name of the old woman is sometimes found in the manuscript as *Siriz* (147 25, 148 4, 157 6, 8) and sometimes as *Sirib* (150 7, 151 28, 153 1), but the rhymes show that the latter is undoubtedly correct (151 28; cf. 148 4); *wib* is similarly written *wiz* (148 5).

*Ci comence le fable et la cointise de Dame Siriz*

As I com bi an waie,  
 Hof<sup>1</sup> on ich herde saie,  
 Ful modi<sup>2</sup> mon and proud;  
 Wis he wes of lore,  
 And gouplich<sup>3</sup> under gore,<sup>4</sup>  
 And cloped in fair sroud.<sup>5</sup>

To lovien he bigon  
 On<sup>6</sup> wedded wimmon —  
 þerof he hevede wrong;  
 His herte hire<sup>7</sup> wes alon,  
 þat reste nevede<sup>8</sup> he non,  
 þe love wes so strong.

Wel ȝerne<sup>9</sup> he him biþoute<sup>10</sup>  
 Hou he hire gete moute,<sup>11</sup>  
 In ani cunnes<sup>12</sup> wise.<sup>13</sup>  
 þat befel on an day  
 þe loverd wend away  
 Hon his marchaundise.<sup>14</sup>

He wente him to þen inne  
 þer<sup>15</sup> hoe<sup>16</sup> wonede inne,  
 þat wes riche won<sup>17</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> of  
<sup>2</sup> haughty  
<sup>3</sup> goodly  
<sup>4</sup> raiment  
<sup>5</sup> apparel  
<sup>6</sup> a

<sup>7</sup> to her  
<sup>8</sup> had not  
<sup>9</sup> intently  
<sup>10</sup> considered  
<sup>11</sup> might  
<sup>12</sup> kind

<sup>13</sup> way  
<sup>14</sup> trafficking  
<sup>15</sup> where  
<sup>16</sup> she  
<sup>17</sup> dwelling



And com into þen halle,  
 þer hoe wes srud<sup>1</sup> wiþ palle,<sup>2</sup>  
 And þus he bigon :

[*Wilekin*] 'God almighty be herinne !'

[*Margeri*] 'Welcome, so ich ever bide winne<sup>3</sup> !'

5

Quod þis wif.

'His hit<sup>4</sup> þi wille, com and site,  
 And wat is þi wille let me wite,  
 Mi leve lif.

Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,  
 If I mai don ani þing  
 þat þe is lef,  
 þou myght finden me ful fre ;  
 Fol bleþeli will I don for þe,  
 Wiphouten gref.'

10

15

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, God þe forgelde<sup>5</sup> !

Bote on þat<sup>6</sup> þou me nout bimde,<sup>7</sup>

Ne make þe wroþ,  
 Min hernde<sup>8</sup> will I to þe bede<sup>9</sup> ;  
 Bote wrappen<sup>10</sup> þe for ani dede<sup>11</sup>  
 Were me loþ.'

20

[*Margeri*] 'Nai, iwis, Wilekin !

For noþing þat ever is min,  
 þau<sup>12</sup> þou hit ȝirne,<sup>13</sup>  
 Houncurteis<sup>14</sup> ne will I be ;  
 Ne con<sup>15</sup> I nout on<sup>16</sup> vilte,<sup>17</sup>  
 Ne nout I nelle lerne.

25

<sup>1</sup> clothed

<sup>2</sup> rich cloth

<sup>3</sup> expect (eternal) happiness ;

MS. wenne

<sup>4</sup> if it is

<sup>5</sup> repay

<sup>6</sup> on condition that

<sup>7</sup> betray

<sup>8</sup> errand

<sup>9</sup> make known

<sup>10</sup> anger

<sup>11</sup> in any way

<sup>12</sup> though

<sup>13</sup> desire

<sup>14</sup> discourteous

<sup>15</sup> know

<sup>16</sup> of

<sup>17</sup> churlishness

þou mai[ɣ]t saien al þine wille,  
 And I shal herkennen and sitten stille,  
 þat<sup>1</sup> þou have told.

And if þat þou me tellest skil,<sup>2</sup>  
 5 I shal don after þi wil —  
 þat be þou bold.<sup>3</sup>

And þau þou saie me ani same,<sup>4</sup>  
 Ne shal I þe nouȝt blame  
 For þi sawe.<sup>5</sup>

10 [Wilekin] 'Nou Ich have wonne leve,<sup>6</sup>  
 Ȝif þat I þe<sup>7</sup> shulde greue,  
 Hit were hounlawe.<sup>8</sup>

Certes, dame, þou seist as hende,<sup>9</sup>  
 And I shal setten spel<sup>10</sup> on ende,  
 15 And tellen þe al —  
 Wat Ich wolde, and wi Ich com;  
 Ne con Ich saien non falsdom,  
 Ne non I ne shal.

Ich habbe iloved þe moni ger,  
 20 þau Ich nabbe nout ben her  
 Mi love to schowe.  
 Wile þi loverd is in toune,  
 Ne mai no mon wiþ þe holden rounne<sup>11</sup>  
 Wiþ no þewe.<sup>12</sup>

Ȝurstendai<sup>13</sup> Ich herde saie,  
 25 As Ich wende bi þe waie,  
 Of oure sire<sup>14</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> till<sup>2</sup> what is reasonable<sup>3</sup> confident, certain<sup>4</sup> shame<sup>5</sup> speech<sup>6</sup> gained permission<sup>7</sup> MS. me<sup>8</sup> wrong<sup>9</sup> a courteous one<sup>10</sup> discourse<sup>11</sup> secret talk<sup>12</sup> propriety<sup>13</sup> yesterday<sup>14</sup> lord, good man

Me<sup>1</sup> tolde me þat he was gon  
 To þe feire of Botolfston<sup>2</sup>  
 In Lincolneschire.

And for Ich weste<sup>3</sup> þat he wes<sup>4</sup> houte,  
 þarfore Ich am I igon aboute 5  
 To speken wiþ þe.  
 Him burþ<sup>5</sup> to liken wel his lif,  
 þat migtte welde<sup>6</sup> secc<sup>7</sup> a wif<sup>8</sup>  
 In privitye.

Dame, if hit is þi wille, 10  
 Boþ dernelike<sup>9</sup> and stille  
 Ich wille þe love.  
 [Margeri] 'þat wold I don for non þin[g],  
 Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,  
 þat ous is bove<sup>10</sup> ! 15

Ich habe mi loverd þat is mi spouse,  
 þat maiden broute me to house  
 Mid menske<sup>11</sup> inou<sup>12</sup> ;  
 He loveþ me and Ich him wel,  
 Oure love is also trewe as stel, 20  
 Wiþhouten wou.<sup>13</sup>

þau he be from hom on his hernde,  
 Ich were ounseli,<sup>14</sup> if Ich lernede  
 To ben on<sup>15</sup> hore.  
 þat ne shal nevere be, 25  
 þat I shal don selk falsete,  
 On bedde ne on flore ;

<sup>1</sup> one, they  
<sup>2</sup> Boston (St. Botolph's town)  
<sup>3</sup> knew  
<sup>4</sup> MS. ves  
<sup>5</sup> behooveth

<sup>6</sup> possess  
<sup>7</sup> such  
<sup>8</sup> MS. vif  
<sup>9</sup> secretly  
<sup>10</sup> above

<sup>11</sup> honor  
<sup>12</sup> enow, enough  
<sup>13</sup> wrong  
<sup>14</sup> wicked  
<sup>15</sup> a

Never more his lifwile,<sup>1</sup>  
 Thau he were on hondred mile  
 Bigende Rome,  
 For no þing ne shuld I take  
 Mon on erþe to ben mi make,<sup>2</sup>  
 Ar<sup>3</sup> his hom-come.'

[*Wilekin*] ' Dame, dame, torn<sup>4</sup> þi mod<sup>5</sup> ;  
 Þi curteisi was ever god,  
 And ȝet shal be ;  
 For þe Loverd þat ous haveþ wrouȝt,  
 Amend þi mod, and torn þi þout,  
 And rew<sup>6</sup> on me.'

[*Margeri*] ' We,<sup>7</sup> we l [h]oldest þou me a fol ?  
 So Ich ever mote biden Ȝol,<sup>8</sup>  
 Þou art ounwis.  
 Mi þout ne shalt þou never<sup>9</sup> wende ;  
 Mi loverd is curteis mon and hende,  
 And mon of pris ;  
 And Ich am wif boþe god and trewe ;  
 Trewe woman mai<sup>10</sup> no mon cnowe  
 Þen Ich am.  
 Þilke time shal<sup>11</sup> never bitide  
 Þat mon, for wouing ne þoru prude,<sup>12</sup>  
 Shal do me scham.'

[*Wilekin*] ' Swete levmon,<sup>13</sup> merci !  
 Same ne vilani  
 Ne bede I þe non ;

<sup>1</sup> lifetime  
<sup>2</sup> mate  
<sup>3</sup> ere  
<sup>4</sup> change  
<sup>5</sup> mind

<sup>6</sup> have compassion  
<sup>7</sup> alas  
<sup>8</sup> Yule, Christmas  
<sup>9</sup> MS. newer  
<sup>10</sup> MS. ne mai

<sup>11</sup> MS. ne shal  
<sup>12</sup> pride  
<sup>13</sup> MS. lenmon, or leumon (?)

Bote derne love I þe bede,  
 As mon þat wolde of love spede,  
 And fi[n]de won.<sup>1</sup>

[*Margeri*] ' So bide Ich evere mete oþer drinke,  
 Her þou lesest al þi swinke.<sup>2</sup>  
 Þou miȝt gon hom, leve broþer,  
 For [ne] wille Ich þe love, ne non oþer  
 Bote mi wedde houssebonde;  
 To tellen hit þe ne wille Ich wonde.<sup>3</sup>

5

[*Wilekin*] ' Certes, dame, þat me forþinkeþ<sup>4</sup>;  
 An[d] wo is þe mon þa[t] muchel swinkeþ,  
 And at þe laste leseþ his sped!  
 To maken menis<sup>5</sup> his<sup>6</sup> him ned;  
 Bi<sup>7</sup> me I saie [hit] ful iwis,  
 Þat love þe — love þat I shal mis.  
 An[d], dame, have nou godne dai!  
 And þilke Loverd þat al welde<sup>8</sup> mai  
 Leve<sup>9</sup> þat þi þout so tourne  
 Þat Ich<sup>10</sup> for þe no leng<sup>11</sup> ne mourne.'

10

15

Drerimod<sup>12</sup> he wente awai,  
 And þoute boþe niȝt and dai  
 Hire al for to wende.  
 A frend him radde<sup>13</sup> for to fare —  
 And leven al his muchele kare —  
 To Dame Sirip<sup>14</sup> þe hende.

20

25

Þider he wente him anon,  
 So suiþe<sup>15</sup> so he miȝtte gon,  
 No mon he ni mette.

<sup>1</sup> joy<sup>2</sup> toil<sup>3</sup> hesitate, fear<sup>4</sup> I am sorry for that<sup>5</sup> moans<sup>6</sup> is<sup>7</sup> about<sup>8</sup> wield<sup>9</sup> grant<sup>10</sup> MS. Ihc<sup>11</sup> longer<sup>12</sup> sad in heart<sup>13</sup> counseled<sup>14</sup> MS. Siriz<sup>15</sup> quickly

Ful he wes of tene<sup>1</sup> and treie<sup>2</sup>;  
 Mid wordes milde and eke sleie<sup>3</sup>  
 Faire he hire grette.

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe iblessi, Dame Sirip<sup>4</sup>!

5 Ich am icom to speken þe with,<sup>5</sup>  
 For ful muchele nede;  
 And<sup>6</sup> Ich mai have help of þe,  
 þou shalt have, þat þou shalt se,  
 Ful riche mede.'

10 [*Sirith*] 'Welcomen art þou, leve sone;

And if Ich mai oþer cone<sup>7</sup>  
 In eni wise for þe do,  
 I shal strengþen me þerto;  
 Forþi,<sup>8</sup> leve sone, tel þou me  
 15 Wat þou woldest I dude for þe.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Bote, leve nelde,<sup>9</sup> ful evele I fare;

I lede mi lif wiþ tene and kare;  
 Wiþ muchel hounsele<sup>10</sup> ich lede mi lif,  
 And þat is for on suete wif  
 20 þat heigtte Margeri.  
 Ich have iloved hire moni dai,  
 And of hire love hoe seiz me nai;  
 Hider Ich com forþi.

Bote-if<sup>11</sup> hoe wende hire mod,  
 25 For serewe<sup>12</sup> mon<sup>13</sup> Ich wakese<sup>14</sup> wod,  
 Oþer miselve quelle.<sup>15</sup>  
 Ich hevede ipout miself to slo<sup>16</sup>;  
 Forþen<sup>17</sup> radde<sup>18</sup> a frend me go,  
 To þe, mi sereue telle.

<sup>1</sup> vexation

<sup>2</sup> grief

<sup>3</sup> shrewd

<sup>4</sup> MS. Siriz

<sup>5</sup> MS. wiz

<sup>6</sup> if

<sup>7</sup> or know how to (can)

<sup>8</sup> therefore

<sup>9</sup> old lady

<sup>10</sup> misfortune

<sup>11</sup> unless

<sup>12</sup> sorrow

<sup>13</sup> must

<sup>14</sup> grow, wax

<sup>15</sup> destroy

<sup>16</sup> slay

<sup>17</sup> therefore

<sup>18</sup> advised

He saide me, wiphouten faille  
 þat þou me coupest helpe and vaile,<sup>1</sup>  
 And bringen me of wo,  
 þoru þine crafftes and þine dedes;  
 And Ich wile geve þe riche mede[s],  
 Wip þat<sup>2</sup> hit be so.'

5

[*Sirith*] 'Benedicite be herinne<sup>3</sup>!

Her havest þou, sone, mikel sinne.<sup>4</sup>  
 Loverd, for his suete name,<sup>5</sup>  
 Lete þe þerfore haven no shame<sup>6</sup>!  
 þou servest affter Godes grame,<sup>7</sup>  
 Wen þou seist on me silk<sup>8</sup> blame;  
 For Ich am old and sek and lame;  
 Seknesse haveþ maked me ful tame.  
 Blesse þe, blesse þe, leve knave,<sup>9</sup>  
 Leste þou mesaventer have  
 For þis lesing<sup>10</sup> þat is founden<sup>11</sup>  
 Oppon me, þat am harde ibo[u]nden!  
 Ich am on holi wimon,  
 On wicchecrafft nout I ne con,  
 Boþe wip gode men[s] almesdede  
 Ilke dai mi lif I fede,  
 And bidde mi Pater Noster and mi Crede,  
 þat Goed hem helpe at hore<sup>12</sup> nede  
 þat helpen me mi lif to lede,  
 And leve þat hem mote wel spede.  
 His lif and his soule worþe ishend<sup>13</sup>  
 þat þe to me þis hernde haveþ send;

10

15

20

25

<sup>1</sup> avail, assist

<sup>2</sup> provided that

<sup>3</sup> blessing be herein = God  
 save us (an exclamation  
 of surprise)

<sup>4</sup> sin; MS. senne

<sup>5</sup> MS. nome

<sup>6</sup> MS. shome

<sup>7</sup> anger; MS. grome

<sup>8</sup> such

<sup>9</sup> boy

<sup>10</sup> lie

<sup>11</sup> invented

<sup>12</sup> their

<sup>13</sup> disgraced

7. Flügel (*Matske Mem. Vol.*, p. 95) prefers 'Benedicite! be herinne!' understanding 'God' as the subject of (opt. or imp.) 'be.'

9. Note the six rhyming lines, like the six below (21-26).

And leve me to ben iwreken <sup>1</sup>  
 On him þis shome me haveþ speken.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Leve nelde, bilef <sup>2</sup> al þis;  
 Me pinkeþ þa[t] þou art onwis.  
 5 þe mon þat me to þe taute,<sup>3</sup>  
 He weste þat þou hous <sup>4</sup> coupest saute.<sup>5</sup>  
 Help, Dame Siriþ, if þou maut,<sup>6</sup>  
 To make me wiþ þe sueting saut,  
 And Ich wille geve þe gift ful stark <sup>7</sup>:  
 10 Moni a pound and moni a marke,  
 Warne pilche <sup>8</sup> and warne shon,  
 Wiþ þat min hernde be wel don.  
 Of muchel godlec <sup>9</sup> miȝt þou ȝelpe,<sup>10</sup>  
 If hit be so þat þou me helpe.'

15 [*Sirith*] 'Lig me nout, Wilekin, bi þi leute.<sup>11</sup>  
 Is hit þin herness <sup>12</sup> þou tekest <sup>13</sup> me?  
 Lovest þou wel Dame Margeri?'

[*Wilekin*] 'Ȝe, nelde, witerli,<sup>14</sup>  
 20 Ich hire love! Hit mot me spille<sup>15</sup>  
 Bote ich gete hire to mi wille.'

[*Sirith*] 'Wat, god Wilekin, me rewep þi scape <sup>16</sup>;  
 Houre Loverd sende þe help rape <sup>17</sup>!

Weste Hic hit miȝtte ben forholen,<sup>18</sup>  
 Me wolde punche wel solen <sup>19</sup>  
 25 þi wille for to fellen.<sup>20</sup>  
 Make me siker wiþ word on honde

<sup>1</sup> avenged<sup>2</sup> leave<sup>3</sup> directed<sup>4</sup> us<sup>5</sup> reconcile, bring to terms<sup>6</sup> canst<sup>7</sup> strong, large<sup>8</sup> fur garments<sup>9</sup> goodness, benefit<sup>10</sup> boast<sup>11</sup> loyalty<sup>12</sup> earnest<sup>13</sup> teachest<sup>14</sup> truly, certainly<sup>15</sup> destroy, ruin<sup>16</sup> harm<sup>17</sup> soon (early)<sup>18</sup> concealed<sup>19</sup> proper (solemn)<sup>20</sup> MS. fullen



þat þou wolt helen,<sup>1</sup> and I wile fonde<sup>2</sup>  
If Ich mai hire tellen.

For al þe world ne wold I nout  
þat Ich were to chapitre<sup>3</sup> ibrout  
For none selke<sup>4</sup> werkes.  
Mi jugement were sone iven —  
To ben wiþ shome somer-driven<sup>5</sup>  
Wiþ<sup>6</sup> prestes and with clarkes.'

5

[*Wilekin*] 'Iwis, nelde, ne wold I

þat þou hevedest vilani

10

Ne shame, for mi goed.

Her I þe mi troupe pliztte,

Ich shal helen bi<sup>7</sup> mi miztte,

Bi þe holi roed !'

[*Sirith*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, hiderward !

15

Her havest imaked a foreward<sup>8</sup>

þat þe mai ful wel like.

þou maizt<sup>9</sup> blesse þilke sip,<sup>10</sup>

For þou maizt make þe ful bliþ ;

Dar<sup>11</sup> þou namore sike.<sup>12</sup>

20

To goderhele<sup>13</sup> ever come þou hider,

For sone will I gange þider,

And maken hire hounderstonde.

I shal kenne<sup>14</sup> hire sulke a lore

þat hoe shal lovien þe mikel more

25

þen ani mon in londe.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Al so hav I Godes grip,<sup>15</sup>

Wel havest þou said, Dame Sirip,

And goderhele shal ben þin.

<sup>1</sup> conceal (it)

<sup>2</sup> try

<sup>3</sup> ecclesiastical court

<sup>4</sup> such

<sup>5</sup> sumpter-driven (slung  
on a pack-animal) ?

<sup>6</sup> by

<sup>7</sup> according to

<sup>8</sup> agreement

<sup>9</sup> mayst

<sup>10</sup> this opportunity

<sup>11</sup> needest (= þar, from OE. *þearf*)

<sup>12</sup> sigh

<sup>13</sup> for good fortune

<sup>14</sup> make known, teach

<sup>15</sup> peace

Have her twenti shiling :  
 þis Ich geve þe to meding,<sup>1</sup>  
 To buggen<sup>2</sup> þe sep<sup>3</sup> and swin.'

5 [Sirith] ' So Ich evere brouke<sup>4</sup> hous oþer flet,<sup>5</sup>  
 Neren never penes<sup>6</sup> beter biset  
 þen þes shulen ben.  
 For I shal don a juperti,<sup>7</sup>  
 And a ferli<sup>8</sup> maistri<sup>9</sup> ;  
 þat þou shalt ful wel sen.—

10 [To her dog] Pepir<sup>10</sup> nou shalt þou ete,<sup>11</sup>  
 þis mustart shal ben pi mete,  
 And gar<sup>12</sup> þin eien to renne<sup>13</sup> ;  
 I shal make a lesing  
 Of þin heie-renning,  
 15 Ich wot wel wer and wenne.'

[Wilekin] ' Wat ! nou const þou no god ?  
 Me pinkep þat þou art wod.  
 Zevest þo þe welpe<sup>14</sup> mustard ? '

20 [Sirith] ' Be stille, boinard<sup>15</sup> !  
 I shal mit<sup>16</sup> þis ilke gin<sup>17</sup>  
 Gar hire love to ben al þin.  
 Ne shal ich never have reste ne ro<sup>18</sup>  
 Til ich have told hou þou shalt do.  
 Abid me her til min hom-come.'

25 [Wilekin] ' Zus,<sup>19</sup> bi þe somer blome,<sup>20</sup>  
 Heþen<sup>21</sup> null I ben binomen,<sup>22</sup>  
 Til þou be agein comen.'

1 reward  
 2 buy  
 3 sheep  
 4 enjoy  
 5 hall (*lit.* floor)  
 6 pence  
 7 venture  
 8 wondrous

9 trick  
 10 MS. pepis  
 11 MS. eten  
 12 make  
 13 run ; MS. *rene*  
 14 whelp  
 15 fool  
 16 with

17 contrivance  
 18 quiet  
 19 yes  
 20 bloom  
 21 hence  
 22 taken away

Dame Sirij bigon to go  
 As a wrecche þat is wo,  
 Þat <sup>1</sup> hoe come hire to þen inne <sup>2</sup>  
 Þer þis gode wif wes inne.  
 Þo hoe to þe dore com,  
 Swiþe reuliche <sup>3</sup> hoe bigon : 5

[*Sirith*] ' Loverd, ' hoe seiþ, ' wo is holde <sup>4</sup> wives,  
 Þat in povertē ledeþ ay [hore] <sup>5</sup> lives ;  
 Not <sup>6</sup> no mon so muchel of pine  
 As poure wif þat falleþ in ansine <sup>7</sup> ; 10  
 Þat mai ilke mon bi me wite,  
 For mai I nouþer gange ne site ;  
 Ded wold I ben ful fain.  
 Hounger and þurst me haveþ nei slain ;  
 Ich ne mai mine limes onwold, <sup>8</sup> 15  
 For mikel hounger and þurst and cold.  
 Wartō liveth selke a wrecche ?  
 Wi nul <sup>9</sup> Goed mi soule fecche ? '

[*Margerī*] ' Seli <sup>10</sup> wif, God þe hounbinde <sup>11</sup> !  
 To dai wille I þe mete finde, 20  
 For love of Goed.  
 Ich have reuþe of þi wo,  
 For evele icloped I se þe go,  
 And evele ishoed ;  
 Com herin, Ich wile þe fede. ' 25

[*Sirith*] ' Goed almiȝtten do þe mede,  
 And þe Loverd þat wes on rode idon, <sup>12</sup>  
 And faste fourti daus <sup>13</sup> to non, <sup>14</sup>  
 And hevene and erþe haveþ to welde,  
 As þilke Loverd þe forȝelde. <sup>15</sup> ' 30

<sup>1</sup> until  
<sup>2</sup> dwelling  
<sup>3</sup> piteously  
<sup>4</sup> old  
<sup>5</sup> See 149 22

<sup>6</sup> knows not  
<sup>7</sup> want  
<sup>8</sup> control  
<sup>9</sup> will not  
<sup>10</sup> good

<sup>11</sup> unbind, pardon  
<sup>12</sup> destroyed  
<sup>13</sup> days  
<sup>14</sup> noon  
<sup>15</sup> requite

[*Margeri*] 'Have her fles<sup>1</sup> and eke bred,  
 And make þe glad, hit is mi red<sup>2</sup>;  
 And have her þe coppe wiþ þe drinke;  
 Goed do þe mede for þi swinke.'

5 þenne spac þat holde wif —  
 Crist awarie<sup>3</sup> hire lif! —  
 [*Sirith*] 'Alas! alas! þat ever I live!  
 Al þe sunne Ich wolde forgive  
 þe mon þat smite of<sup>4</sup> min heved!  
 10 Ich wolde mi lif me were bireved!'

[*Margeri*] 'Seli wif, what eilleþ þe?'

[*Sirith*] 'Bote eþe<sup>5</sup> mai I sori be:  
 Ich hevede a douter feir and fre,<sup>6</sup>  
 Feiror ne miȝtte no mon se.  
 15 Hoe hevede a curteis hossebonde,  
 Freour<sup>7</sup> mon miȝtte no mon fonde.<sup>8</sup>  
 Mi douter lovede him al to wel;  
 Forþi<sup>9</sup> mak I sori del.<sup>10</sup>  
 Oppon a dai he was out wend,  
 20 And þarþoru<sup>11</sup> wes mi douter shend.  
 He hede on ernde out of toune;  
 And com a modi<sup>12</sup> clarc wiþ croune,<sup>13</sup>  
 To mi douter his love beed,  
 And hoe nolde nout folewe his red.  
 25 He ne miȝtte his wille have,  
 For no þing he miȝtte crave;  
 þenne bigon þe clerc to wiche,<sup>14</sup>  
 And shop<sup>15</sup> mi douter til a biche.  
 þis is mi douter þat Ich of speke;

<sup>1</sup> flesh, meat

<sup>2</sup> advice

<sup>3</sup> curse

<sup>4</sup> off

<sup>5</sup> easily

<sup>6</sup> noble

<sup>7</sup> nobler

<sup>8</sup> search out

<sup>9</sup> on this account

<sup>10</sup> lament

<sup>11</sup> by this means, thereby

<sup>12</sup> proud

<sup>13</sup> tonsure

<sup>14</sup> use witchcraft

<sup>15</sup> transformed (shaped)

For del of hire min herte breke.  
 Loke hou hire heien greten,<sup>1</sup>  
 On hire cheken þe teres meten.<sup>2</sup>  
 Forþi, dame, were hit no wonder,  
 þau min herte burste assunder. 5  
 A[nd] wose ever is zong houssewif,  
 Ha <sup>3</sup> loveþ ful luitel hire lif,  
 And <sup>4</sup> eni clerc of love hire bede,  
 Bote <sup>5</sup> hoe grante, and lete him spede.'

[*Margeri*] 'A, Loverd Crist! wat mai [I] penne do? 10  
 þis enderdai <sup>6</sup> com a clarc me to,  
 And bed <sup>7</sup> me love on his manere,  
 And Ich him nolde nout ihere.  
 Ich trouue he wolle me forsape.<sup>8</sup>  
 Hou troustu,<sup>9</sup> nelde, Ich moue ascape?' 15

[*Sirith*] 'God almygtten be þin help  
 þat þou ne be nouþer bicche ne welp!  
 Leve dame, if eni clerc  
 Bedeþ þe þat love-werc,  
 Ich rede þat þou grante his bone,<sup>10</sup> 20  
 And bicom his lefmon sone.  
 And if þat þou so ne dost,  
 A worse red þou ounderfost.<sup>11</sup>'

[*Margeri*] 'Loverd Crist, þat me is wo,  
 þat þe clarc me hede<sup>12</sup> fro 25  
 Ar he me hevede biwonne!  
 • Me were levere þen ani fe<sup>13</sup>  
 That he hevede enes<sup>14</sup> leien bi me,  
 And eftsones<sup>15</sup> bigunne.

<sup>1</sup> shed tears<sup>2</sup> meet<sup>3</sup> she<sup>4</sup> if<sup>5</sup> unless<sup>6</sup> the other day<sup>7</sup> offered<sup>8</sup> transform<sup>9</sup> thinkest thou, believest thou<sup>10</sup> request (boon)<sup>11</sup> receivest, takest<sup>12</sup> went<sup>13</sup> property<sup>14</sup> once<sup>15</sup> again

8. of: the verb takes the genitive of the thing besought in OE.

Evermore, nelde, ich wille be þin,  
 Wiþ þat<sup>1</sup> þou feche me Willekin,  
 þe clarc of wam I telle;  
 Giftes will I geve þe  
 5 þat þou maigt ever þe betere be,  
 Bi Godes hounne belle !'

[*Sirith*] ' Sopliche, mi swete dame,  
 And if I mai wiþoute blame,  
 Fain Ich wille ffonde;  
 10 And if Ich mai wiþ him mete  
 Bi eni wei oper bi strete,  
 Nout ne will I wonde.<sup>2</sup>

Have god dai, dame ! forþ will I go.'  
 [*Margeri*] ' Allegate<sup>3</sup> loke þat þou do so  
 15 As Ich þe bad;  
 Bote þat þou me Wilekin bringe,  
 Ne mai [I] never lawe<sup>4</sup> ne singe,  
 Ne be glad.'

[*Sirith*] ' Iwis, dame, if I mai,  
 20 Ich wille bringen him ȝet to-dai,  
 Bi mine migtte.'  
 Hoe wente hire to hire inne,  
 Her hoe founde Wilekinne,  
 Bi houre Driȝtte<sup>5</sup> !

[*Sirith*] ' Swete Wilekin, be þou nout dred,  
 25 For of þin her[n]de Ich have wel sped.  
 Swiþe com for[þ] þider wiþ me,  
 For hoe haveþ send after þe;

<sup>1</sup> provided that  
<sup>2</sup> hesitate

<sup>3</sup> in every way, by all means  
<sup>4</sup> laugh

<sup>5</sup> our Lord

6 belle : sacring bell, used in the mass; see *Seven Sages* (Percy Soc. 16), l. 2285 : ' By Goddis belle.'

Iwis nou maigt þou ben above,  
For þou havest grantise<sup>1</sup> of hire love.'

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe forgelde, leve nelde,  
þat hevene and erþe haveþ to welde!'

þis modi mon bigon to gon 5  
Wip Sirip<sup>2</sup> to his leuemon  
In pilke stounde.<sup>3</sup>  
Dame Sirip<sup>2</sup> bigon to telle,  
And swor bi Godes ouene belle,  
Hoe hevede him founde. 10

[*Sirith*] 'Dame, so have ich Wilekin sout,  
For nou have Ich him ibroust.'

[*Margerī*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, swete þing,  
þou art welcomore þen þe king.

Wilekin þe swete, 15  
Mi love I þe bihete,  
To don al þine wille.  
Turnd Ich have mi þout,  
For I ne wolde nout  
þat þou þe shuldest spille.' 20

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, so Ich evere bide noen,<sup>4</sup>  
And Ich am redi and iboen<sup>5</sup>  
To don al þat þou saie.  
Nelde, par ma fai!<sup>6</sup>  
þou most gange awai, 25  
Wile Ich and hoe shulen plaie.' . . .<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> grant<sup>2</sup> MS. Siriz<sup>3</sup> moment<sup>4</sup> noon<sup>5</sup> ready, prepared<sup>6</sup> by my faith<sup>7</sup> One stanza omitted

- [*Sirith*] ' And wose is onwis,  
 And for non pris  
       Ne con geten his levemon,  
 I shal, for mi mede,  
 5       Garen him to spede,  
       For ful wel I con.'

## ROBIN HOOD AND THE MONK

This poem, though unmistakably a ballad, tells a story, and is therefore here classed as a tale, though perhaps it has nearly equal claim to be called a romance. It is one of the few ballads of whose early date we are assured, the manuscript being of about 1450. It is No. 119 of Child's great collection (3. 94-101); see also Sargent and Kittredge's edition in one volume, pp. 282-6. I omit stanzas 30-8, 53-66, both inclusive, and the end, stanzas 83-90. There is an unfortunate break after the first two lines of stanza 30, due to the loss of a sheet of the manuscript.

What Gummere says of ballads in general (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2. 474; the whole chapter should be read) is true of this in particular: 'They give a hint of primitive and unspoiled poetic sensation. . . They can tell a good tale. They are fresh with the open air; wind and sunshine play through them.' For myself, I may add that the two opening stanzas of this ballad seem to me of peculiar loveliness.

- In somer, when þe shawes <sup>1</sup> be sheyne,<sup>2</sup>  
       And leves be large and long,  
 Hit is full mery in feyre foreste  
 10       To here þe foullys song ;  
  
 To se þe dere draw to þe dale,  
       And leve þe hilles hee,  
 And shadow hem in þe leves grene,  
       Under the grenewode tre.  
  
 15       Hit befel on Whitsontide,  
       Erly in a May mornynge,  
 The son up feyre can <sup>3</sup> shyne,  
       And the briddis mery can synge.

<sup>1</sup> thickets, groves<sup>2</sup> beautiful<sup>3</sup> did



'This is a mery mornynge,' seide Litull John,  
 'Be hym þat dyed on tre;  
 A more mery man þen I am one  
 Lyves not in Cristiante.<sup>1</sup>

Pluk up þi hert, my dere mayster,' 5  
 Litull John can sey,  
 'And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme  
 In a mornynge of May.'

'Ȝe,<sup>2</sup> on thyng greves me,' seide Robyn,  
 'And does my hert mych woo;  
 þat I may not no solem day 10  
 To mas nor matyns goo.

Hit is a fourtinet and more,' seide he,  
 'Syn I my Savyour<sup>3</sup> see;  
 To-day wil I to Notyngham,' seide Robyn, 15  
 'With þe myght of mylde Marye.'

Than spake Moche,<sup>4</sup> þe mylner<sup>5</sup> sun —  
 Ever more wel hym betyde!  
 'Take twelve of þi wyght<sup>6</sup> ȝemen,<sup>7</sup>  
 Well weppynd, be þi side. 20  
 Such on wolde þiselfe slon,  
 þat twelve dar not abyde.<sup>8</sup>'

'Of all my mery men,' seide Robyn,  
 'Be my feith I wil non have,  
 But Litull John shall beyre my bow, 25  
 Til þat me list to drawe.'

<sup>1</sup> Christendom<sup>2</sup> yea<sup>3</sup> consecrated wafer or host<sup>4</sup> Much<sup>5</sup> miller's<sup>6</sup> sturdy<sup>7</sup> yeomen<sup>8</sup> withstand

'þou shall beyre þin own,' seid Litull Jo[h]n,  
 'Maister, and I wyl beyre myne,  
 And we well shete a peny,<sup>1</sup>' seid Litull Jo[h]n,  
 'Under þe grenewode lyne.<sup>2</sup>'

5 'I wil not shete a peny,' seyd Robyn Hode,  
 'In feith, Litull John, with the,  
 But ever for on as<sup>3</sup> þou shetis,' seide Robyn,  
 'In feith I holde þe thre.'

Thus shet þei forth, þese gemen too,  
 10 Bothe at buske<sup>4</sup> and brome,<sup>5</sup>  
 Til Litull John wan of his maister  
 Five shillings to<sup>6</sup> hose and shone.

A ferly<sup>7</sup> strife fel þem betwene,  
 As they went bi the wey;  
 15 Litull John seid he had won five shillings,  
 And Robyn Hode seid schortly, 'Nay.'

With þat Robyn Hode lyed<sup>8</sup> Litul Jo[h]n,  
 And smote hym with his hande;  
 20 Litul Jo[h]n waxed wroth þerwith,  
 And pulled out his bright bronde.

'Were þou not my maister,' seid Litull John,  
 'þou shuldis by<sup>9</sup> hit ful sore;  
 Get þe a man wher þou w[ilt],  
 For þou getis me no more.'

25 þen Robyn goes to Notyngham,  
 Hymselfe mornynge<sup>10</sup> allone,  
 And Litull John to mery Scherwode --  
 The pathes he knew ilkone.

<sup>1</sup> shoot for a penny<sup>2</sup> lime, linden<sup>3</sup> that<sup>4</sup> bush<sup>5</sup> broom<sup>6</sup> for<sup>7</sup> fierce<sup>8</sup> gave the lie to<sup>9</sup> pay for<sup>10</sup> mourning

Whan Robyn came to Notyngham,  
 Sertenly withouten layn,<sup>1</sup>  
 He prayed to God and myld Mary  
 To bryng hym out save<sup>2</sup> agayn.

He gos into Seynt Mary chirch, 5  
 And kneled down before the rode<sup>3</sup>;  
 Alle þat ever were þe church within  
 Beheld wel Robyn Hode.

Beside hym stod a gret-hedid munke,  
 I pray to God woo he be! 10  
 Fful sone he knew gode Robyn,  
 As sone as he hym se.

Out at þe durre he ran,  
 Fful sone and anon;  
 Alle þe gatis of Notyngham 15  
 He made to be sparred everychon.

'Rise up,' he seid, 'þou prowde schereff,  
 Buske<sup>4</sup> þe and make þe bowne<sup>5</sup>;  
 I have spyed þe kynggis felon,  
 Fforsothe he is in þis town. 20

I have spyed þe false felon,  
 As he stondis at his masse;  
 Hit is long of<sup>6</sup> þe,' seide þe munke,  
 'And<sup>7</sup> ever he fro us passe.

þis traytur name is Robyn Hode, 25  
 Under þe grenewode lynde<sup>8</sup>;  
 He robbyt me onys of a hundred pound,  
 Hit shalle never out of my mynde.'

<sup>1</sup> lying  
<sup>2</sup> safe  
<sup>3</sup> cross

<sup>4</sup> prepare  
<sup>5</sup> ready  
<sup>6</sup> through, by means of

<sup>7</sup> if  
<sup>8</sup> linden

Up þen rose þis prowde shereff,  
 And radly<sup>1</sup> made hym ȝare<sup>2</sup>;  
 Many was þe moder son  
 To þe kyrk with hym can fare.

5 In at þe dures þei throly<sup>3</sup> thraſt,<sup>4</sup>  
 With staves ful gode wone<sup>5</sup>;  
 'Alas, alas!' seid Robyn Hode,  
 'Now mysse I Litull John.'

10 But Robyn toke out a too-hond sworde,  
 þat hangit down be his kne;  
 þer as þe schereff and his men stode thyckust,  
 Thepurwarde wolde he.

15 Thryes thorowout þem he ran þen,  
 Forsoþe, as I yow sey,  
 And woundyt mony a moder son,  
 And twelve he slew þat day.

20 His sworde upon þe schireff hed  
 Sertanly he brake in too;  
 'þe smyth þat þe made,' seid Robyn,  
 'I pray God<sup>6</sup> wyrke hym woo!

Ffor now am I weppynlesse,' seid Robyn,  
 'Alasse! agayn my wylle;  
 But-if I may fle þese traytors fro,  
 I wot þei wil me kyll.'

There is a break in the manuscript two lines after this point, but it is evident from what follows that Robin Hood's men in some way learn of his capture. All of them are utterly distracted by this news save Little John, who feels sure that 'our Lady' will care for her servant. He himself will see to the monk.

<sup>1</sup> quickly<sup>2</sup> ready<sup>3</sup> stoutly<sup>4</sup> thrust<sup>5</sup> number<sup>6</sup> MS. to God

Litul John stode at a wyndow in þe mornynge,  
 And lokid forþ at a stage;  
 He was war wher þe munke came ridyng,  
 And with hym a litul page.

'Be my feith,' seid Litul John to Moch, 5  
 'I can þe tel tithyngus<sup>1</sup> gode;  
 I se wher þe munke cumys rydyng,  
 I know hym be his wyde hode.'

They went into the way, þese gemen boþe,  
 As curtes men and hende; 10  
 Þei spyrrid<sup>2</sup> tithyngus at þe munke,  
 As they hade bene his frende.

Ffro whens come ge?' seid Litull Jo[h]n,  
 'Tel us tithyngus, I yow pray,  
 Off a false owtlay, [callid Robyn Hode,] 15  
 Was takyn gisterday.

He robbyt me and my felowes boþe  
 'Of twenti marke in sertayn<sup>3</sup>;  
 If þat false owtlay be takyn,  
 Fforsoþe we wolde be fayn.' 20

'So did he me,' seid þe munke,  
 'Of a hundred pound and more;  
 I layde furst hande hym apon,  
 ðe may thonke me þerfore.'

'I pray God thanke you,' seid Litull John, 25  
 'And we wil when we may;  
 We wil go with you, with your leve,  
 And bryng yow on your way.

<sup>1</sup> tidings<sup>2</sup> asked<sup>3</sup> M.S. serten

Ffor Robyn Hode hase many a wilde felow,  
 I tell you in certayn<sup>1</sup>;  
 If þei wist ȝe rode þis way,  
 In feith ȝe shulde be slayn.'

5 As þei went talking be þe way,  
 The munke and Litull John,  
 John toke þe munkis horse be þe hede,  
 Fful sone and anon.

10 John<sup>2</sup> toke þe munkis horse be þe hed,  
 Fforsoþe, as I yow say;  
 So did Much, þe litull page,  
 Ffor<sup>3</sup> he shulde not scape away.

Be þe golett<sup>4</sup> of þe hode  
 John pulled þe munke down;  
 15 John was nothyng of hym agast —  
 He lete hym falle on his crown.

Litull John was so[re] agrevyd,  
 And drew owt his swerde in hye<sup>5</sup>;  
 This munke saw he shulde be ded,  
 20 Lowd 'mercy!' can<sup>6</sup> he crye.

'He was my maister,' seid Litull John,  
 'Þat þou hase browȝt in bale<sup>7</sup>;  
 Shalle þou never cum at our kyng,  
 Ffor to telle hym tale.'

25 John smote of þe munkis hed,  
 No longer wolde he dwell<sup>8</sup>;  
 So did Moch þe litull page,  
 Ffor ferd<sup>9</sup> lest he wolde tell. . . .

<sup>1</sup> MS. certen<sup>2</sup> MS. Johne<sup>3</sup> that<sup>4</sup> throat<sup>5</sup> haste<sup>6</sup> did<sup>7</sup> trouble<sup>8</sup> decay<sup>9</sup> fear

Little John and Much then carry to the king the letters taken from the monk's body, conveying the tidings of Robin's capture. The king rejoices at this news, gives the men twenty pounds as a reward, and makes them yeomen of the crown. He then bids Little John bear his privy seal to the sheriff of Nottingham, commanding that Robin Hood be brought to him, alive and uninjured.

The scheref made John gode chere,  
And gaf hym wyne of the best ;  
At nyȝt þei went to her bedde,  
And every man to his rest.

When þe scheref was on slepe,<sup>1</sup>  
Dronken of wyne and ale,  
Litul John and Moch, forsoþe,  
Toke þe way unto þe jale.

5

Litul John callid up þe jayler,  
And bade hym rise anon ;  
He seyð Robyn Hode had brokyn prison,  
And out of hit was gon.

10

The porter rose anon, sertan,  
As sone as he herd John calle ;  
Litul John was redy with a swerd,  
And bare hym to þe walle.

15

' Now wil I be porter,' seid Litul John,  
' And take þe keyes in honde ' ;  
He toke þe way to Robyn Hode,  
And sone he hym unbonde.

20

He gaf hym a gode swerd in his hond,  
His hed with for to kepe,<sup>2</sup>  
And ther as þe walle was lowyst  
Anon down can þei lepe.

<sup>1</sup> asleep<sup>2</sup> to defend his head with

Be þat þe cok began to crow,  
 The day began to spryng,  
 The scheref fond þe jaylier ded,  
 The comyn bell made he ryng.

5 He made a crye thoroout al þe tow[n],  
 Wheder he be zoman or knave  
 Þat cowþe bryng hym Robyn Hode,  
 His warison<sup>1</sup> he shuld have.

‘Ffor I dar never,’ said þe scheref,  
 10 ‘Cum before oure kyng ;  
 Ffor if I do, I wot serten  
 Fforsoþe he wil me heng.’

The scheref made to seke Notyngham,  
 Bothe be strete and stye,<sup>2</sup>  
 15 And Robyn was in mery Scherwode,  
 As ligt as lef on lynde.

Then bespake gode Litull John,  
 To Robyn Hode can he say :  
 ‘I have done þe a gode turne for an evyll,  
 20 Quyte þe<sup>3</sup> whan þou may.

‘I have done þe a gode turne,’ seid Litull John,  
 ‘Fforsothe, as I yow say ;  
 I have brougt þe under grenewode lyne ;  
 Ffarewel, and have gode day.’

25 ‘Nay, be my trouth,’ seid Robyn Hode,  
 ‘So shall hit neuer be ;  
 I make þe maister,’ seid Robyn Hode,  
 ‘Off alle my men and me.’

<sup>1</sup> reward<sup>2</sup> lane<sup>3</sup> make return



'Nay, be my trouth,' seid Litull John,  
 'So shalle hit never be;  
 But lat me be a felow,<sup>1</sup>' seid Litull John,  
 'No noder kepe I be.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus John gate Robyn Hod[e] out of prison, 5  
 Sertan withoutyn layn<sup>3</sup>;  
 Whan his men saw hym hol and sounde,  
 Fforsothe they were full fayne.

They filled in wyne, and made hem glad,  
 Under þe levys smale, 10  
 And ȝete<sup>4</sup> pastes of venyson,  
 þat gode was with ale.

Eight stanzas remain. Word of the escape is carried to the king, who declares that, though Little John has beguiled both the sheriff and himself, he has been true to Robin Hood.

## KING ROBERT OF SICILY

This is the poem from which Longfellow drew the Sicilian's tale, in the first series of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Leigh Hunt related the story in prose in his *Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* (1848); a play was founded on it in the reign of Henry VII, and acted at Chester in 1529 (Ward, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Lit.* 1. 93-4; Collier, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Poetry*, London, 1831, 1. 113-5; 2. 128, 415; Hazlitt, *Rem. Early Pop. Poetry*, London, 1864, 1. 264-88); and Rudolf Schmidt drew from it his drama, *Den Forvandlede Konge*, which appeared in 1876, and was several times played at Copenhagen. Closely allied to our Middle English poem is Jean de Condé's (fl. 1310-1340) *Li Dis dou Magnificat* (*Dits et Contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son Fils, Jean de Condé*, ed. Scheler, Brussels, 1866, 2. 355-70, 455 ff.). The former, however, has been influenced by the romance of *Robert the Devil* (cf. Varnhagen, *Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Berlin, 1884, pp. 43-7), from which the king's name, Robert, may come, together with certain traits of his life as fool; Robert the Devil, like the king, reaches Rome on Maundy Thursday.

The tale appears in numerous versions, European and Asiatic. One set of the European versions derives from the story of Jovinian in the Gesta Romanorum. Much earlier is the Jewish legend, which occurs in four versions (Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, Kabbala, etc.), one of which connects the story

<sup>1</sup> comrade<sup>2</sup> no other I care to be<sup>3</sup> dissembling<sup>4</sup> ate

with Jer. 9. 23, instead of with the Magnificat. On the Hebrew are founded an Arabic and a Turkish version, and the former, in turn, may have been influenced by the Hindoo belief in metempsychosis (see Varnhagen, *op. cit.*, and his *Ein Indisches Märchen auf seiner Wanderung*, Berlin, 1882).

Our text (lines 90-199, 383-416) is taken from Horstmann, *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden* (Heilbronn, 1878). The poem must be earlier than 1370, the approximate date of the Vernon manuscript.

The first part of the poem may be summarized as follows: King Robert of Sicily was brother to Pope Urban and Emperor Valmond (not historical), and was proud to think that he had no equal. On Midsummer Night (June 24) he went to vespers, and heard a verse of the Magnificat — *Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles* — which he made a clerk translate to him, and then scoffed at it. In church he fell asleep, and when vespers were over was left there alone, his place with the court being taken by an angel who assumed his appearance. At length the king wakes, cries out for his men, and is roughly accosted by the sexton, who, finally, thinking him to be mad, opens the church-door.

þe kyng bigan to renne out faste ;  
 As a man þat was wod  
 At his paleys-gate he stod,  
 And het þe porter gadelyng,<sup>1</sup>  
 5 And bad him come in hixyng,<sup>2</sup>  
 Anon þe gates up<sup>3</sup> to do.  
 Þe porter seide : ‘ Ho <sup>4</sup> clepeþ <sup>5</sup> so ? ’  
 He answered riȝt anon :  
 ‘ Þou schalt witen,<sup>6</sup> ar I gon :  
 10 Þi lord I am, þou schalt knowe ;  
 In prison þou schalt ligge <sup>7</sup> lowe,  
 And ben honged and todrawe <sup>8</sup>  
 As a traytur, bi þe lawe ;  
 Þou schalt wel wite I am kyng.  
 15 Opene þe gates, gadelyng ! ’  
 Þe porter seide : ‘ So mot <sup>9</sup> I þe,<sup>10</sup>  
 Þe kyng is mid his meyne <sup>11</sup> ;  
 Wel I wot, wiþoute doute,  
 Þe kyng nis nouȝt <sup>12</sup> now wiþoute.’

<sup>1</sup> knave<sup>2</sup> haste<sup>3</sup> open<sup>4</sup> who<sup>5</sup> calleth<sup>6</sup> know<sup>7</sup> lie<sup>8</sup> drawn<sup>9</sup> may<sup>10</sup> thrive, prosper<sup>11</sup> court<sup>12</sup> not

þe porter com into halle,  
 Bifore þe newe kyng a <sup>1</sup> knes gan falle,  
 And seide : ' þer is atte <sup>2</sup> gate  
 A nyce <sup>3</sup> fol, ycome late ;  
 He seiþ he is lord and kyng, 5  
 And cleped me foule gadelyng.  
 Lord, what wile ge þat I do —  
 Lete him in, or lete him go ? '  
 þe angel seide in haste :  
 ' Do him come in swiþe <sup>4</sup> faste ; 10  
 For mi fol I wile him make,  
 Forte <sup>5</sup> he þe name of kyng forsake.'  
 þe porter com to þe gate,  
 And him called in — to late :  
 He smot þe porter whan he com in, 15  
 þat blod brast out of mouþ and chin.  
 þe porter zeld <sup>6</sup> him his travayle —  
 Him smot agen, wipouten fayle,  
 þat nese and mouþ brast a <sup>7</sup> blod.  
 þanne he <sup>8</sup> semed almost wod. 20  
 þe porter and his men in haste  
 Kyng Roberd in a podel <sup>9</sup> caste,  
 Unsemely made his bodi þan,  
 þat he nas lik non oper man,  
 And brougt him bifore þe newe kyng, 25  
 And seide : ' Lord, þis gadelyng  
 Me haþ smite wipoute desert ;  
 He seiþ he is oure kyng apert <sup>10</sup> ;  
 Þis harlot <sup>11</sup> ougte for his sawe <sup>12</sup>  
 Ben yhonged and todrawe, 30  
 For he seiþ non oper word  
 Bote þat he is boþe kyng and lord.'

<sup>1</sup> on  
<sup>2</sup> at the  
<sup>3</sup> silly  
<sup>4</sup> full

<sup>5</sup> until  
<sup>6</sup> requited  
<sup>7</sup> with  
<sup>8</sup> King Robert

<sup>9</sup> puddle  
<sup>10</sup> clearly  
<sup>11</sup> rascal  
<sup>12</sup> saying

þe angel seide to Kyng Roberd :  
 ' þou art a fol, þat art nougt ferd <sup>1</sup>  
 Mi men to do such vileynye ;  
 þi gult þou most nede abyen. <sup>2</sup>  
 5 What art þou ? ' seide þe angel.  
 Quap Roberd : ' þou schalt wite wel :  
 I am kyng, and kyng wil be ;  
 Wiþ wronge <sup>3</sup> þou hast mi dignite.  
 þe Pope of Rome is mi broþer,  
 10 And þe Emperour min oþer ;  
 þei wil me wreke, <sup>4</sup> forsop to telle,  
 I wot þei nille nougt longe dwelle. <sup>5</sup> '  
 ' þou art mi fol, ' seide þe angel ;  
 ' þou schalt be schore <sup>6</sup> everichdel <sup>7</sup>  
 15 Lich a fol, a fol to be —  
 Wher is now þi dignite ?  
 þi counseyler schal ben an ape,  
 And o <sup>8</sup> cloþyng zou <sup>9</sup> worp <sup>10</sup> yschape <sup>11</sup>  
 I schal him cloþen as þi broþer,  
 20 Of o cloþyng — hit nis non oþer ;  
 He schal be þin owne fere <sup>12</sup> —  
 Sum wit of him þou miȝt lere.  
 Houndes, howso hit falle, <sup>13</sup>  
 Schulen ete wiþ þe in halle ;  
 25 þou schalt eten on þe ground ;  
 þin assayour <sup>14</sup> schal ben an hound,  
 To assaye þi mete bifore þe —  
 Wher is now þi dignite ? '  
 He het a barbur him bifore,  
 30 þat as a fol he schulde be schore  
 Al around lich a frere, <sup>15</sup>  
 An hondebrede bove eiþer ere,

<sup>1</sup> afraid<sup>2</sup> expiate<sup>3</sup> wrongfully<sup>4</sup> avenge<sup>5</sup> tarry<sup>6</sup> shorn<sup>7</sup> in every respect<sup>8</sup> one, the same<sup>9</sup> for you both<sup>10</sup> shall be<sup>11</sup> made<sup>12</sup> partner<sup>13</sup> befall<sup>14</sup> taster<sup>15</sup> friar

And on his croune make a crois.  
 He gan crie and make nois :  
 He swor þei schulde alle abyē  
 þat him dude such vileynye,  
 And ever he seide he was lord ; 5  
 And eche man scorned him for þat word,  
 And eche man seide he was wod —  
 þat proved wel he couþe no good.  
 For he wende in none wise  
 þat God almiȝti couþe devise 10  
 Him to bringe to lower stat ;  
 Wiþ o drauȝt<sup>1</sup> he was chekmat.  
 Wiþ houndes everich niȝt he lay,  
 And ofte he cried welaway  
 þat he ever was ybore, 15  
 For he was a man forlore.  
 þer nas in court grom ne page  
 þat of þe kyng ne made rage,<sup>2</sup>  
 For no man ne miȝte him knowe :  
 He was defigured in a þrowe.<sup>3</sup> 20  
 So lowe er þat was never kyng ;  
 Allas, her was a delful<sup>4</sup> þing —  
 þat him<sup>5</sup> scholde, for his pride,  
 Such hap among his men bitide !  
 Hunger and þurst he hadde grete,<sup>6</sup> 25  
 For he ne moste<sup>7</sup> no mete ete,  
 Bote houndes eten of his disch.

The story continues thus: The new king gave Sicily an angelic government for more than three years—almost four, it would seem. At length—in April it was—he received a letter from Valmond, inviting him to Rome for Maundy Thursday. Thither the king went, and in his train the fool, the latter in a garment decorated with fox-tails, the angel in white samite set with pearls, and on a white steed. The deposed Robert appeals to his brothers in

<sup>1</sup> move<sup>2</sup> sport<sup>3</sup> trice<sup>4</sup> doleful<sup>5</sup> MS. he<sup>6</sup> great<sup>7</sup> might, was allowed

vain, and thereupon thinks of Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes, and how their pride was brought low. With this he pours out his heart in prayer: 'Lord, on thy fool have thou pity!' At the end of five weeks the king returns to Sicily.

þe angel com to Cisyle,  
 He and his men, in a while;  
 Whan he com into halle,  
 þe fol he bad forþ calle.  
 5 He seide: 'Fol, artow kyng?'  
 'Nay, sire,' quap he, 'wiþoute lesyng.'<sup>1</sup>  
 'What artow?' seide þe angel.  
 'Sire, a fol, þat wot I wel,  
 And more þan fol, gif hit may be:  
 10 Kep<sup>2</sup> I non oþer dignite.'  
 þe angel into chaumbre went;  
 After þe fol anon he sent;  
 He bad his men out of chaumbre gon;  
 þer lefte<sup>3</sup> no mo but he alon,  
 15 And þe fol þat stod him bi.  
 To him he seide: 'þou hast merci.  
 þenk þou were lowe pult,<sup>4</sup>  
 And al was for þin owne gult:  
 A fol þou were to hevene Kyng,  
 20 þerfore þou art an underlyng.  
 God haþ forgive þi mysdede;  
 Ever hereafter þou him drede!  
 I am an angel of renoun,  
 Sent to kepe þi regioun.  
 25 More joye me schal falle  
 In hevene among mi feren<sup>5</sup> alle  
 In an oure of a day  
 þan in erþe, I þe say,  
 In an hundred þousand ȝer,  
 30 þeig al þe world fer and ner

<sup>1</sup> falsehood  
<sup>2</sup> hold

<sup>3</sup> remained  
<sup>4</sup> placed

<sup>5</sup> companions

Were min at mi likyng.  
 I am an angel, þou art kyng.<sup>7</sup>  
 He went in twynklyng of an ege.  
 No more of him þer nas sege.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAUCER, CLERK'S TALE: THE STORY OF GRISELDA

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note to *Sir Thopas*, p. 108.

Ther is at the west syde of Itaille,  
 Doun at the rote of Vesulus <sup>2</sup> the colde,  
 A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,  
 Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,  
 That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,  
 And many another delitable sighte;  
 And Saluces <sup>3</sup> this noble contree highte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,  
 As were his worthy eldres him bifore;  
 And obeisant and reþy to his honde  
 Were alle his liges,<sup>4</sup> bothe lasse and more.  
 Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,<sup>5</sup>  
 Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,  
 Bothe of his lordes and of his commune.<sup>6</sup>

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,  
 The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye,  
 A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,  
 And ful of honour and of curteisye;  
 Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye<sup>7</sup> —  
 Save in somme thinges that he was to blame —  
 And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

Lines 22-105 are here omitted. Walter's subjects urge him to marry, and he promises, conditionally, to do so. The next selection includes lines 106-19.

<sup>1</sup> seen<sup>4</sup> vassals<sup>7</sup> guide, rule<sup>2</sup> Monte Viso<sup>5</sup> for a long time<sup>3</sup> Saluzzo, southwest of Turin<sup>6</sup> common people, commons

'Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,  
 That charge upon my bak I wol endure;  
 But I yow preye, and charge upon your lyf,  
 That what wyf that I take, ye me assure  
 5 To worshiþe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,  
 In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,  
 As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye  
 Agayn<sup>1</sup> my choys shul neither grucche<sup>2</sup> ne stryve;  
 10 For sith I shal forgoon my libertee  
 At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,  
 Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;  
 And but ye wole assente in swich manere,  
 I prey yow, speketh namore of this matere.'

Lines 120-40 are here omitted. Walter names the wedding-day, and orders the wedding-feast. The next selection includes lines 141-343.

15 Noght fer fro thilke paleys honorable,  
 Ther as this markis shoop<sup>3</sup> his mariage,  
 Ther stood a throp,<sup>4</sup> of site delitable,<sup>5</sup>  
 In which that povre folk of that village  
 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,<sup>6</sup>  
 20 And of hir labour took hir sustenance,  
 After that th'erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man  
 Which that was holden povrest of hem alle  
 (But hye God som tyme senden can  
 25 His grace into a litel oxes stalle);  
 Janicula men of that throp him calle.  
 A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to sighte,  
 And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

<sup>1</sup> against<sup>2</sup> murmur, grumble<sup>3</sup> prepared for, planned<sup>4</sup> thorp, small village<sup>5</sup> delightful<sup>6</sup> lodging



But for to speke of vertuous beautee,  
 Than was she oon the faireste under sonne ;  
 For povreliche yfostred up was she,  
 No likerous <sup>1</sup> lust was thurgh hir herte yronne ;  
 X Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne <sup>2</sup> 5  
 She drank, and, for she wolde vertu plese,  
 She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,  
 Yet in the brest of hir virginitee  
 Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage <sup>3</sup> ; 10  
 And in greet reverence and charitee  
 Hir olde povre fader fostred she ;  
 A fewe sheep, spinning, on feeld she kepte,  
 She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde bringe 15  
 Wortes <sup>4</sup> or othere herbes, tymes ofte,  
 The whiche she shredde and seeth <sup>5</sup> for hir livinge,  
 And made hir bed ful harde, and nothing softe ;  
 And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf onlofte <sup>6</sup>  
 With everich obeisaunce and diligence 20  
 That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this povre creature,  
 Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yë,  
 As he on hunting rood paraventure <sup>7</sup> ;  
 And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye, 25  
 He noght with wantoun loking of folye  
 X His yën caste on hir, but in sad wyse  
 Upon hir chere <sup>8</sup> he wolde him ofte avyse,<sup>9</sup>

Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,  
 And eek hir vertu, passing any wight 30  
 Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.

<sup>1</sup> wanton<sup>2</sup> tun, cask<sup>3</sup> serious disposition<sup>4</sup> herbs<sup>5</sup> boiled<sup>6</sup> aloft (kept aloft = sustained)<sup>7</sup> by chance<sup>8</sup> face, countenance<sup>9</sup> take thought

For thogh the peple have no greet insight  
 In vertu, he considered ful right  
 Hir bountee, and disposed <sup>1</sup> that he wolde  
 Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde.

5       The day of wedding cam, but no wight can  
 Telle what womman that it sholde be ;  
 For which merueille wondred many a man, —  
 And seyden, whan they were in privetee :  
 ‘ Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee ?  
 10       Wol he nat wedde ? allas, allas the whyle !  
 Why wol he thus himself and us bigyle ? ’

But natheles this markis hath don make <sup>2</sup>  
 Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,  
 Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake,  
 15       And of hir clothing took he the mesure  
 By a mayde, lyk to hir [as of <sup>3</sup>] stature,  
 And eek of othere ornamentes alle  
 That unto swich a wedding sholde falle.

The tyme of undern <sup>4</sup> of the same day  
 20       Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be ;  
 And al the paleys put was in array,  
 Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree ;  
 Houses of office <sup>5</sup> stuffed with plentee,  
 Ther maystow seen, of deyntevous <sup>6</sup> vitaille,<sup>7</sup>  
 25       That may be founde as fer as last <sup>8</sup> Itaille.

This royal markis, richely arrayed,  
 Lordes and ladyes in his companye,  
 The whiche unto the feste were yprayed,  
 And of his retenue the bachelrye,<sup>9</sup>  
 30       With many a soun of sondry melodye,

<sup>1</sup> planned<sup>2</sup> had made<sup>3</sup> in respect to<sup>4</sup> about 9 A.M.<sup>5</sup> servants' offices<sup>6</sup> dainty<sup>7</sup> food<sup>8</sup> farthest (part of)<sup>9</sup> company of young men

Unto the village, of the which I tolde,  
In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, God woot, ful innocent  
That for hir shapen was al this array,  
To fecchen water at a well is went, 5  
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may ;  
For wel she hadde herd seyde that thilke day  
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,  
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte : ' I wol with othere maydens stonde 10  
That been my felawes, in our dore, and see  
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde <sup>1</sup>  
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,  
The labour which that longeth unto me ;  
And than I may at leyser hir biholde, 15  
If she this wey unto the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,  
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle ;  
And she set down hir water-pot anon  
Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle, 20  
And down upon hir knees she gan to falle,  
And with sad contenance kneleth stille,  
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoughtful markis spak unto this mayde  
Ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere : 25  
' Wher is your fader, Grisildis ? ' he sayde.  
And she with reverence, in humble chere,  
Answerde : ' Lord, he is al redy here.'  
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette,  
And to the markis she hir fader fette. 30

<sup>1</sup> try, endeavor

He by the hond than took this olde man,  
 And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde :  
 ' Janicula, I neither may ne can  
 Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde ;  
 5 If that thou vouchesauf, whatso bityde,  
 Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,<sup>1</sup>  
 As for my wyf, unto hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,  
 And art my feithful lige man ybore ;  
 10 And al that lyketh<sup>2</sup> me, I dar wel seyn  
 It lyketh thee, and specially therfore  
 Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore —  
 If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe  
 To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe ?'

15 This sodeyn cas<sup>3</sup> this man astoned so  
 That reed he wex, abayst,<sup>4</sup> and al quaking  
 He stood ; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,  
 But only thus : ' Lord,' quod he, ' my willing  
 Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking  
 20 I wol nothing ; ye be my lord so dere ;  
 Right as yow lust governeth<sup>5</sup> this matere.'

' Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,  
 ' That in thy chambre I and thou and she  
 Have a collacion,<sup>6</sup> and wostow why ?  
 25 For I wol axe if it hir wille be  
 To be my wyf, and reule hir after me ;  
 And al this shal be doon in thy presence —  
 I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'

And in the chambre whyl they were aboute  
 30 Hir tretis,<sup>7</sup> which as ye shal after here,  
 The peple cam unto the hous withoute,

<sup>1</sup> go<sup>2</sup> pleaseth<sup>3</sup> happening<sup>4</sup> abashed, disconcerted<sup>5</sup> arrange (imp. plur.)<sup>6</sup> conference<sup>7</sup> treaties, agreements

And wondred hem in how honest <sup>1</sup> manere  
 And tentifly <sup>2</sup> she kepte hir fader dere.  
 But outerly <sup>3</sup> Grisildis wondre mighte,  
 For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned 5  
 To seen so greet a gest come in that place ;  
 She never was to swiche gestes woned,<sup>4</sup>  
 For which she loked with ful pale face.  
 But shortly forth this tale for to chace,  
 Thise arn the wordes that the markis sayde 10  
 To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel understonde  
 It lyketh to your fader and to me  
 That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,  
 As I suppose ye wol that it so be. 15  
 But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,  
 'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,  
 Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse <sup>5</sup> ?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte  
 To al my lust, and that I frely may, 20  
 As me best thinketh, do yow <sup>6</sup> laughe or smerte,  
 And never ye to grucche it, night ne day ?  
 And eek whan I sey "ye," ne <sup>7</sup> sey nat "nay,"  
 Neither by word ne frowning contenance ;  
 Swer this, and here I swere our alliance.' 25

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,  
 She seyde : ' Lord, undigne <sup>8</sup> and unworthy  
 Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,<sup>9</sup>  
 But as ye wol yourself, right so wol I ;  
 And heer I swere that never willingly 30

<sup>1</sup> creditable, decent  
<sup>2</sup> attentively, carefully  
<sup>3</sup> utterly

<sup>4</sup> accustomed  
<sup>5</sup> consider the matter (=refuse)  
<sup>6</sup> cause you to

<sup>7</sup> So MS. *read*; ye (?)  
<sup>8</sup> undeserving  
<sup>9</sup> offer

In werk ne thocht I nil yow disobeye,  
For to be <sup>1</sup> deed, though me were looth to deye.'

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn!' quod he.  
And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere  
5 Out at the dore, and after that cam she,  
And to the peple he seyde in this manere:  
'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth here.  
Honoureth hir and loveth hir, I preye,  
Whoso me loveth; ther is namore to seye.'

10 And for that nothing of hir olde gere <sup>2</sup>  
She sholde bringe into his hous, he bad  
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right there;  
Of which thise ladyës were nat right glad  
To handle hir clothes wherin she was clad.  
15 But natheles this mayde, bright of hewe,  
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed  
Ful rudely, and with hir <sup>3</sup> fingres smale  
A corone on hir heed they han ydressed,<sup>4</sup>  
20 And sette hir ful of nowches <sup>5</sup> grete and smale:  
Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?  
Unnethe <sup>6</sup> the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,  
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring  
25 Broght for the same cause, and than hir sette  
Upon an hors, snow-whyte and wel ambling,  
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,<sup>7</sup>  
With joyful peple that hir ladde and mette,  
Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende  
30 In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

<sup>1</sup> even if I were to be<sup>2</sup> apparel<sup>3</sup> their<sup>4</sup> placed, arranged<sup>5</sup> jewels<sup>6</sup> scarcely, with difficulty<sup>7</sup> delayed

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,  
 I seye that to this newe markisesse  
 God hath swich favour sent hir, of his grace,  
 That it ne semed nat by lyklinesse  
 That she was born and fed in rudenesse, 5  
 As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,  
 But norished in an emperoures halle. ←

Lines 344-441 are here omitted. A daughter is born to Griselda. Soon after, in order to try her patience, Walter tells her that his subjects grumble about her low birth, and announces that the child must be taken from her. The next selection embraces lines 442-518.

Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved,<sup>1</sup>  
 Neither in word, or chere, or countenance ;  
 For, as it semed, she was nat agreved. 10  
 She seyde : ' Lord, al lyth in your plesaunce ;  
 My child and I with hertly obeisaunce<sup>2</sup>  
 Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille\*  
 Your owene thing<sup>4</sup> ; werketh after your wille.

Ther may nothing — God so my soule save ! — 15  
 Lyken to yow that may displese me ;  
 Ne I desyre nothing for to have,  
 Ne drede for to lese, save only ye ;  
 This wil is in myn herte, and ay shal be.  
 No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface, 20  
 Ne chaunge my corage<sup>3</sup> to another place.'

Glad was this markis of hir answering,  
 But yet he feyned as he were nat so ;  
 Al drery was his chere and his loking,  
 Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go. 25  
 Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,  
 He prively hath told al his entente  
 Unto a man, and to his wyf him sente.

<sup>1</sup> changed  
<sup>2</sup> hearty obedience

<sup>3</sup> destroy  
<sup>4</sup> possession

<sup>5</sup> mind, disposition

A maner<sup>1</sup> sergeant<sup>2</sup> was this privee man,  
 The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde  
 In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can<sup>3</sup>  
 Don execucioun on thinges badde.

5 The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde;  
 And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,  
 Into the chambre he stalked him ful stille.

'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it me,  
 Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned;  
 10 Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye  
 That lordes hestes mowe nat been yfeyned<sup>4</sup>;  
 They mowe wel ben biwailed or compleyned,  
 But men mot nede unto her<sup>5</sup> lust obeye,  
 And so wol I; ther is namore to seye.

15 This child I am comanded for to take';  
 And spak namore, but out the child he hente<sup>6</sup>  
 Despitously, and gan a chere<sup>7</sup> make  
 As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.  
 Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;  
 20 And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,  
 And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the diffame<sup>8</sup> of this man,  
 Suspect his face, suspect his word also;  
 Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.  
 25 Allas! hir doghter that she lovede so,  
 She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.  
 But natheless she neither weep ne syked,<sup>9</sup>  
 Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.

But atte laste speken she bigan,  
 30 And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,  
 So as he was a worthy gentil man,

<sup>1</sup> sort of<sup>2</sup> officer<sup>3</sup> know how to<sup>4</sup> evaded<sup>5</sup> their<sup>6</sup> seized<sup>7</sup> behavior<sup>8</sup> ill report<sup>9</sup> sighed



That she moste<sup>1</sup> kisse hir child er that it deyde ;  
 And in her barm<sup>2</sup> this litel child she leyde  
 With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse,  
 And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.<sup>3</sup>

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys : 5  
 ' Farweel, my child ; I shal thee never see ;  
 But, sith I thee have marked with the croys,  
 Of thilke Fader blessed mote thou be  
 That for us deyde upon a croys of tree !  
 Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,<sup>4</sup> 10  
 For this night shaltow dyen for my sake.'

I trowe that to a norice<sup>5</sup> in this cas  
 It had ben hard this rewthe for to se ;  
 Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed ' Allas !'  
 But nathelees so sad stedfast was she, 15  
 That she endured all adversitee,  
 And to the sergeant mekely she sayde :  
 ' Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now,' quod she, ' and dooth my lordes heste,  
 But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace, 20  
 That, but<sup>6</sup> my lord forbad yow, atte leste  
 Burieth this litel body in som place,  
 That bestes ne no briddes it torace.<sup>7</sup>'  
 But he no word wol to that purpos seye,  
 But took the child, and wente upon his weye. 25

Lines 519-756 are here omitted. The child is taken in safety to Boulogne to Walter's sister, the countess. After four years a boy is born, and, to try Griselda's patience yet further, this child, too, is taken from her, and similarly disposed of. As a last test, Walter tells her that she herself must leave him, and return to her father's cottage, for his people demand that he take a high-born wife. The next selection embraces lines 757-805.

<sup>1</sup> might  
<sup>2</sup> lap  
<sup>3</sup> bless

<sup>4</sup> commit  
<sup>5</sup> nurse  
<sup>6</sup> unless

<sup>7</sup> tear to pieces

And she answerde agayn in pacience :  
 ' My lord,' quod she, ' I woot, and wiste alway,  
 How that bitwixen your magnificence  
 And my poverte no wight [ne] can ne may  
 5 Maken comparison ; it is no nay.  
 I heeld<sup>1</sup> me never digne in no manere  
 To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.<sup>2</sup>

And in this hous, ther ye me lady made —  
 The heighe God take I for my witnesse,  
 10 And also wisly he my soule glade<sup>3</sup> —  
 I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,  
 But humble servant to your worthinesse,  
 And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure,  
 Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so longe of your benignitee  
 Han holden me in honour and nobleye,  
 Whereas I was noght worthy for to be,  
 That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preye  
 15 Foryelde<sup>4</sup> it yow ; there is namore to seye.  
 20 Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,  
 And with him dwelle unto my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,  
 Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede,  
 A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.  
 25 For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,  
 And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,  
 God shilde<sup>5</sup> swich a lordes wyf to take  
 Another man to housbonde or to make.

And of your newe wyf, God of his grace  
 30 So graunte yow wele and prosperitee !  
 For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,

<sup>1</sup> MS. ne heeld  
<sup>2</sup> chambermaid

<sup>3</sup> comfort  
<sup>4</sup> to requite

<sup>5</sup> forbid

In which that I was blisful wont to be ;  
 For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod she,  
 ' That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,  
 That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.

But ther as ye me profre swich dowaire 5  
 As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde  
 It were my wrecched clothes, nothing faire,  
 The which to me were hard now for to finde.  
 O gode God ! how gentil and how kinde  
 Ye semed by your speche and your visage 10  
 The day that maked was our mariage !

But sooth is seyð, algate<sup>1</sup> I finde it trewe —  
 For in effect it preved is on me —  
 Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.  
 But certes, lord, for noon adversitee, 15  
 To dyen in the cas,<sup>2</sup> it shal nat be  
 That ever in word or werk I shal repente  
 That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.'

Lines 806–994 are here omitted. Griselda returns to her father's home, with but a single garment, and Walter's prospective marriage is announced. Soon he summons Griselda to prepare his house for the bride's coming, and she meekly obeys. When the bride and her brother appear, Griselda praises the maiden's beauty, and begs Walter to deal with her gently and kindly. The next selection embraces lines 995–1071.

' This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he,  
 ' Be now namore agast ne yvel apayed<sup>3</sup> ; 20  
 I have thy feith and thy benignitee,  
 As wel as ever womman was, assayed,  
 In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed.  
 Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse' —  
 And hir in armes took, and gan hir kesse. 25

<sup>1</sup> at any rate

<sup>2</sup> though death were the result

<sup>3</sup> ill pleased

And she for wonder took of it no keep<sup>1</sup> ;  
 She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde ;  
 She ferde<sup>2</sup> as she had stert out of a sleep,  
 Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.<sup>3</sup>  
 5 ' Grisilde,' quod he, ' by God that for us deyde,  
 Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,  
 Ne never hadde, as God my soule save !

This is thy doghter which thou hast supposed  
 To be my wyf ; that other feithfully  
 10 Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed ;  
 Thou bare him in thy body trewely.  
 At Boloigne have I kept hem<sup>4</sup> prively ;  
 Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye  
 That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.

15 And folk that otherweyes<sup>5</sup> han seyd of me,  
 I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede  
 For no malice ne for no crueltee,  
 But for t' assaye in thee thy wommanhede,  
 And nat to sleen my children — God forbede ! —  
 20 But for to kepe hem prively and stille,  
 Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth  
 For pitous joye, and after hir swowninge  
 She bothe hir yonge children unto hir calleth,  
 25 And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,  
 Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge  
 Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres  
 She batheth bothe hir<sup>6</sup> visage and hir heres.

O, which a pitous thing it was to see  
 30 Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here !  
 ' Graunt mercy,' lord ! that thanke I yow,' quod she,

<sup>1</sup> notice  
<sup>2</sup> behaved  
<sup>3</sup> awoke

<sup>4</sup> them  
<sup>5</sup> otherwise  
<sup>6</sup> their

<sup>7</sup> best thanks

' That ye han saved me my children dere !  
 Now rekke I never to ben deed right here ;  
 Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,  
 No fors of <sup>1</sup> deeth, ne whan my spirit pace !

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne, 5  
 Your woful mooder wende <sup>2</sup> stedfastly  
 That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne  
 Hadde eten yow ; but God, of his mercy,  
 And your benigne fader tendrely  
 Hath doon yow kept <sup>3</sup> ; and in that same stounde <sup>4</sup> 10  
 Al sodeynly she swapte <sup>5</sup> adoun to grounde.

And in her swough <sup>6</sup> so sadly holdeth she  
 Hir children two, whan she gan hem t' embrace,  
 That with greet sleighte <sup>7</sup> and greet difficultee  
 The children from hir arm they gonne arace. <sup>8</sup> 15  
 O many a teer on many a pitous face  
 Doun ran, of hem that stoden hir bisyde ;  
 Unnethe <sup>9</sup> abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth, <sup>10</sup> and hir sorwe slaketh <sup>11</sup> ;  
 She ryseth up, abaysed, <sup>12</sup> from hir traunce ; 20  
 And every wight hir joye and feste maketh,  
 Til she hath caught agayn hir contenaunce.  
 Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce  
 That it was deyntee <sup>13</sup> for to seen the chere  
 Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met yfere. <sup>14</sup> 25

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say, <sup>15</sup>  
 Han taken hir, and into chambre goon,  
 And strepen hir out of hir rude array ;

<sup>1</sup> no matter for<sup>2</sup> believed<sup>3</sup> caused you to be saved<sup>4</sup> moment<sup>5</sup> fell<sup>6</sup> swoon<sup>7</sup> dexterity<sup>8</sup> tear away<sup>9</sup> scarcely<sup>10</sup> cheers<sup>11</sup> assuages<sup>12</sup> amazed<sup>13</sup> delightful<sup>14</sup> together<sup>15</sup> saw

And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,  
 With a coroune of many a riche stoon  
 Upon hir heed, they into halle hir broghte,  
 And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

- 5            Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,  
             For every man and womman dooth his might  
             This day in murthe and revel to dispende,  
             Til on the welkne<sup>1</sup> shoon the sterres light.  
             For more solempne in every mannes sight  
 10            . This feste was, and gretter of costage,<sup>2</sup>  
             Than was the revel of hir mariage.

### THE FOX AND THE WOLF

*The Fox and the Wolf* is found in the same manuscript as *Dame Sirith*, and may therefore be assigned to the same date. It is a humorous beast-tale, a species of which this is the only English representative before the time of Chaucer. A version is to be found in Harris' *Uncle Remus Stories*, under the title, 'Old Mr. Rabbit, he's a Good Fisherman.' For the bibliography of the subject, see McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (D. C. Heath & Co., 1913).

Of the *Roman de Renard*, to which our poem is related, Jusserand says (1. 152): 'Superb manuscripts were illustrated for the libraries of the nobles; the incidents of this epic were represented in tapestry, sculptured on church stalls, painted on the margins of English missals. At the Renaissance, Caxton, with his Westminster presses, printed a *Renard* in prose.'

The dialect is Southern — *vox* for *fox*, etc.; and *v* is sometimes represented by *w*. The misplacement of *h*, now a mark of Cockney speech, is frequent.

- A vox gon out of þe wode go,  
             Afingret<sup>3</sup> so þat him wes wo;  
             He nes nevere in none wise  
 15            Afingret erour<sup>4</sup> half so swipe.<sup>5</sup>  
             He ne hoeld<sup>6</sup> nouþer wey ne strete,

<sup>1</sup> welkin, heaven

<sup>2</sup> expense

<sup>3</sup> ahungred

<sup>4</sup> before

<sup>5</sup> much

<sup>6</sup> held, kept to

For him wes loþ men to mete ;  
 Him were levere meten one hen  
 þen half an oundred <sup>1</sup> wimmen.  
 He strok <sup>2</sup> swiþe <sup>3</sup> overal, <sup>4</sup> ̅  
 So þat <sup>5</sup> he ofsei <sup>6</sup> ane wal ; 5  
 Wiþinne þe walle wes on <sup>7</sup> hous.  
 The wox wes þider <sup>8</sup> swiþe wous, <sup>9</sup>  
 For he þouhte <sup>10</sup> his hounger aquenche, <sup>11</sup>  
 Oþer mid mete, oþer mid drenche. <sup>12</sup>  
 Abouten he biheld wel ġerne <sup>13</sup> ; 10  
 þo eroust <sup>14</sup> bigon þe vox to erne <sup>15</sup>  
 Al fort <sup>16</sup> he come to one walle ;  
 And som þerof wes afalle,  
 And wes þe wal overal tobroke, <sup>17</sup>  
 And on ġat <sup>18</sup> þer wes iloke. <sup>19</sup> 15  
 At þe furmeste <sup>20</sup> bruche <sup>21</sup> þat he fond,  
 He lep in, and over he wond. <sup>22</sup>  
 þo he wes inne, smere <sup>23</sup> he lou, <sup>24</sup>  
 And þerof he hadde gome <sup>25</sup> inou ;  
 For he com in wiþouten leve 20  
 Boþen of haiward <sup>26</sup> and of reve. <sup>27</sup>  
 On hous þer wes — þe dore wes ope —  
 Hennen weren þerinne icrope <sup>28</sup> —  
 Five, þat makeþ anne flok —  
 And mid hem sat on kok. 25  
 þe kok him wes flowen on hey,  
 And twō hennen him seten ney.  
 ' Wox, ' quod þe kok, ' wat dest þou þare ?

<sup>1</sup> a hundred  
<sup>2</sup> went, passed (OE. *strīcan*)  
<sup>3</sup> soon  
<sup>4</sup> everywhere  
<sup>5</sup> until  
<sup>6</sup> observed  
<sup>7</sup> a  
<sup>8</sup> (to go) thither  
<sup>9</sup> ready (OE. *fȳs*)  
<sup>10</sup> thought ; MS. *þohute*

<sup>11</sup> to appease  
<sup>12</sup> MS. *drunche*  
<sup>13</sup> eagerly  
<sup>14</sup> then first  
<sup>15</sup> run  
<sup>16</sup> until  
<sup>17</sup> broken to pieces  
<sup>18</sup> gate  
<sup>19</sup> locked  
<sup>20</sup> first

<sup>21</sup> breach, opening  
<sup>22</sup> went, wriggled (OE. *windan*)  
<sup>23</sup> scornfully  
<sup>24</sup> laughed  
<sup>25</sup> sport  
<sup>26</sup> hedge-ward (one who protected the crops within enclosed fields)  
<sup>27</sup> reeve (farm-overseer)  
<sup>28</sup> crept (OE. *crēoþan*)

Go hom, Crist þe geve kare !  
 Houre<sup>1</sup> hennen þou dest ofte shome.<sup>2</sup>  
 ' Be stille, Ich hote,<sup>3</sup> a Godes nome !'  
 Quap þe wox : ' Sire Chauntecler,  
 5 þou fle adoun, and com me ner.  
 I nabbe<sup>4</sup> don her nout bote goed,  
 I have leten þine hennen blod ;  
 Hy weren seke ounder þe ribe,  
 þat hy ne miȝtte non lengour libe<sup>5</sup>  
 10 Bote<sup>6</sup> here heddre<sup>7</sup> were itake<sup>8</sup> ;  
 þat I do for almes sake.  
 Ich have hem letten eddre<sup>7</sup> blod,  
 And þe, Chauntecler, hit wolde don goed.  
 þou havest þat ilke ounder þe splen,<sup>9</sup>  
 15 þou nestes<sup>10</sup> nevere daies ten ;  
 For þine lif-dayes beþ al ago,  
 Bote þou bi mine rede<sup>11</sup> do ;  
 I do þe lete blod ounder þe brest,  
 Oper sone axe after þe prest.'  
 20 ' Go wei,' quod þe kok, ' wo þe bigo<sup>12</sup> !  
 þou havest don oure kunne<sup>13</sup> wo.  
 Go mid<sup>14</sup> þan þat þou havest nouþe<sup>15</sup> ;  
 Acoursed be þou of Godes mouþe !  
 For were I adoun, bi Godes nome,  
 25 Ich miȝte ben siker of oþre shome.  
 Ac weste<sup>16</sup> hit houre cellerer<sup>17</sup>  
 þat þou were icomen her,  
 He wolde sone after þe zonge,  
 Mid pikes, and stones, and staves stronge ;  
 30 Alle þine bones he wolde tobreke ;  
 þene we weren wel awreke.<sup>18</sup>'

<sup>1</sup> our<sup>2</sup> shame, dishonor<sup>3</sup> bid<sup>4</sup> have not<sup>5</sup> live<sup>6</sup> unless<sup>7</sup> vein (OE. *ædre*)<sup>8</sup> opened (?)<sup>9</sup> spleen<sup>10</sup> dost build a nest<sup>11</sup> counsel<sup>12</sup> take possession of<sup>13</sup> kind, race<sup>14</sup> with<sup>15</sup> now<sup>16</sup> if (our cellarer) knew<sup>17</sup> cellarer<sup>18</sup> avenged



He<sup>1</sup> wes stille, ne spak namore,  
 Ac he werþ<sup>2</sup> apurst wel sore ;  
 Þe þurst him dede more wo  
 Þen hevede rapen<sup>3</sup> his hounger do.  
 Overal he ede<sup>4</sup> and souhte ;<sup>5</sup> 5  
 On aventure his witt<sup>6</sup> him brouhte<sup>7</sup>  
 To one putte<sup>8</sup> — wes water inne —  
 Þat wes imaked mid grete ginne.<sup>9</sup>  
 Tuo boketes þer he founde :  
 Þat oper<sup>10</sup> wende to þe grounde, 10  
 Þat wen<sup>11</sup> me shulde þat on opwinde,  
 Þat oper wolde adoun winde.  
 He ne hounderstod nout of þe ginne ;  
 He nom<sup>12</sup> þat boket, and lep þerinne,  
 For he hopede inou to drinke. 15  
 Þis boket beginneþ to sinke ;  
 To late þe vox wes biþout,<sup>13</sup>  
 Þo he wes in þe ginne ibroust.  
 Inou he gon him biþenche,  
 Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche<sup>14</sup> ; 20  
 Adoun he moste, he wes þerinne ;  
 Ikaut he wes mid swikele<sup>15</sup> ginne.  
 Hit migte han iben wel his wille  
 To lete þat boket hongy stille.  
 Wat<sup>16</sup> mid serewe<sup>17</sup> and mid drede 25  
 Al his þurst him overhede.<sup>18</sup>  
 Al þus he com to þe grounde,  
 And water inou þer he founde.  
 Þo he fond water, ȝerne he dronk ;  
 Him þoute þat water þere stonk, 30  
 For hit wes toȝeines his wille.

<sup>1</sup> the fox<sup>2</sup> became<sup>3</sup> earlier, before<sup>4</sup> went (OE. *ēode*)<sup>5</sup> MS. sohute<sup>6</sup> MS. wiit<sup>7</sup> MS. brohute<sup>8</sup> pit, well<sup>9</sup> clever contrivance<sup>10</sup> second<sup>11</sup> when<sup>12</sup> took<sup>13</sup> had bethought himself<sup>14</sup> trick<sup>15</sup> deceiving<sup>16</sup> what<sup>17</sup> sorrow<sup>18</sup> passed away (OE. *oferēode*)

- 'Wo worþe,' quap þe vox, 'lust and wille,  
 þat ne can<sup>1</sup> meþ<sup>2</sup> to his mete!  
 3 þef ich nevede to muchel i-ete,  
 þis ilke shome nedd<sup>3</sup> I nouþe,  
 5 Nedde lust iben of mine mouþe.  
 Him is wo in euche londe,  
 þat is þef mid his honde.  
 Ich am ikaut mid swikele ginne,  
 Oþer soum devel me broute herinne.  
 10 I was woned<sup>4</sup> to ben wiis,  
 Ac nou of me idon hit hiis.<sup>5</sup>  
 þe vox wep, and reuliche<sup>6</sup> bigan.  
 þer com a wolf gon after þan  
 Out of þe depe wode blive,<sup>7</sup>  
 15 For he wes afingret swiþe.  
 Noþing he ne founde in al þe nigte,  
 Wermide<sup>8</sup> his honger aquenche miȝtte.  
 He com to þe putte, þene vox iherde;  
 He him kneu wel bi his rerde,<sup>9</sup>  
 20 For hit wes his neizebore,  
 And his gossip, of<sup>10</sup> children bore.  
 Adoun bi þe putte he sat.  
 Quod þe wolf: 'Wat may ben þat  
 þat Ich in þe putte ihere?  
 25 Hertou<sup>11</sup> Cristine, oþer mi fere<sup>12</sup>?  
 Say me soþ, ne gabbe<sup>13</sup> þou me nout,  
 Wo<sup>14</sup> haveþ þe in þe putte ibrouȝ?'  
 þe vox hine ikneu wel for his kun,  
 And þo eroust kom wiit to him;  
 30 For he poute mid soumme ginne  
 Himself houpbringe,<sup>15</sup> þene wolf þerinne.

<sup>1</sup> knows<sup>2</sup> moderation<sup>3</sup> should not have had<sup>4</sup> accustomed, wont<sup>5</sup> is (and now it is all up with me)<sup>6</sup> sadly<sup>7</sup> quickly<sup>8</sup> wherewith<sup>9</sup> speech<sup>10</sup> from the time they were<sup>11</sup> art thou<sup>12</sup> companion<sup>13</sup> jest, lie<sup>14</sup> who<sup>15</sup> to bring up

Quod þe vox : ' Wo is nou pere ?  
 Ich wene hit is Sigrim þat Ich here.'  
 ' Þat is soþ,' þe wolf sede ;  
 ' Ac wat art þou, so God þe rede ?'  
 ' A !' quod þe vox, ' Ich wille þe telle ; 5  
 On alpi<sup>1</sup> word Ich lie nelle.<sup>2</sup>  
 Ich am Reneuard, þi frend,  
 And gif Ich þine come<sup>3</sup> hevede iwend,<sup>4</sup>  
 Ich hedde so ibede<sup>5</sup> for þe,  
 Þat þou sholdest comen to me.' 10  
 ' Mid þe ?' quod þe wolf. ' War to ?  
 Wat shulde Ich ine þe putte do ?'  
 Quod þe vox : ' Þou art ounwiis,  
 Her is þe blisse of paradiis ;  
 Her Ich mai evere wel fare, 15  
 Wipouten pine,<sup>6</sup> wipouten kare ;  
 Her is mete, her is drinke,  
 Her is blisse wipouten swinke<sup>7</sup> ;  
 Her nis hounger never mo,  
 Ne non oper kunnes<sup>8</sup> wo ; 20  
 Of alle gode her is inou.'  
 Mid þilke wordes þe wolf<sup>9</sup> lou.  
 ' Art þou ded, so God þe rede,  
 Oper of þe worlde ?' þe wolf sede.  
 Quod þe wolf : ' Wenne storve<sup>10</sup> þou, 25  
 And wat dest þou pere nou ?  
 Ne beþ nout zet þre daies ago,  
 Þat þou and þi wif also,  
 And pine children, smale and grete,  
 Alle togedere mid me hete.<sup>11</sup> ' 30  
 ' Þat is soþ,' quod þe vox,  
 ' Gode þonk, nou hit is þus,  
 Þat Ihc am to Criste vend<sup>12</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> single (OE. *antþig*)

<sup>2</sup> will not

<sup>3</sup> coming

<sup>4</sup> thought of

<sup>5</sup> prayed

<sup>6</sup> pain, trouble

<sup>7</sup> labor

<sup>8</sup> of no other kind

<sup>9</sup> MS. volf

<sup>10</sup> diedst

<sup>11</sup> ate

<sup>12</sup> = wend

- Not <sup>1</sup> hit non of mine frend.  
 I nolde, for al þe worlde's goed,  
 Ben ine þe worlde, þer Ich hem fond;  
 Wat <sup>2</sup> shuld Ich ine þe worlde go,  
 5 þer <sup>3</sup> nis bote kare and wo,  
 And livie in fulþe <sup>4</sup> and in sunne?  
 Ac her beþ joies fele cunne <sup>5</sup>;  
 Her beþ boþe shep and get. <sup>6</sup>
- Þe wolf haveþ hounger swiþe gret,  
 10 For he nedde gare <sup>7</sup> i-ete;  
 And þo he herde speken of mete,  
 He wolde bleþeliche <sup>8</sup> ben þare.  
 'A!' quod þe wolf, 'gode ifere,<sup>9</sup>  
 Moni goed mel þou havest me binome <sup>10</sup>;  
 15 Let me adoun to þe kome,  
 And al Ich wole þe forþeve.'  
 'Ze,' quod þe vox, 'were þou isrive,<sup>11</sup>  
 And sunnen hevedest al forsake,  
 And to klene lif itake,  
 20 Ich wolde so bidde for þe  
 þat þou sholdest comen to me.'  
 'To wom shuld Ich,' þe wolfe seide,  
 Ben iknowe of <sup>12</sup> mine misdede?  
 Her nis noþing alive  
 25 þat me kouþe her nou srive.  
 Þou havest ben ofte min ifere,  
 Woltou nou mi srift <sup>13</sup> ihere,  
 And al mi liif I shal þe telle?'  
 'Nay,' quod þe vox, 'I nelle.'  
 30 'Neltou <sup>14</sup>?' quod þe wolf; 'þin ore <sup>15</sup>!  
 Ich am afingret swiþe sore;  
 Ich wot to-nigt ich worþe ded

<sup>1</sup> knows not<sup>2</sup> why (what)<sup>3</sup> where<sup>4</sup> filth, foulness<sup>5</sup> many kinds<sup>6</sup> goats<sup>7</sup> for a long time<sup>8</sup> gladly<sup>9</sup> friend, companion (OE. *gefēra*)<sup>10</sup> taken away from<sup>11</sup> shriven<sup>12</sup> confess<sup>13</sup> shrift, confession<sup>14</sup> wilt thou not<sup>15</sup> (grant) thy grace, favor (OE. *ār*)

Bote þou do me somne reed.  
 For Cristes love, be mi prest.  
 Þe wolf bey<sup>1</sup> adoun his brest,  
 And gon to siken<sup>2</sup> harde and stronge.  
 'Woltou,' quod þe vox, 'srift ounderfonge,<sup>3</sup> 5  
 Tel þine sunnen on and on,<sup>4</sup>  
 Þat þer bileve<sup>5</sup> never on.'  
 'Sone,' quod þe wolf, 'wel ifaie<sup>6</sup>;  
 Ich habbe ben qued<sup>7</sup> al mi lifdaie;  
 Ich habbe widewene<sup>8</sup> kors,<sup>9</sup> 10  
 Þerfore ich fare þe wors.  
 A þousent shep ich habbe abiten,  
 And mo, ȝef hy weren iwriten,  
 Ac hit me ofþinkeþ<sup>10</sup> sore.  
 Maister, shal I tellen more?' 15  
 'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'al þou most sugge,<sup>11</sup>  
 Oper elleswer þou most abugge.<sup>12</sup>'  
 'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'forȝef hit me,  
 Ich habbe ofte sehid qued bi<sup>18</sup> þe.  
 Men seide þat þou on þine live 20  
 Misferdest<sup>14</sup> mid mine wive;  
 Ich þe aperseivede one stounde,  
 And in bedde togedere ou<sup>15</sup> founde;  
 Ich wes ofte ou ful ney,  
 And in bedde togedere ou sey.<sup>16</sup> 25  
 Ich wende, also oþre doþ,  
 Þat<sup>17</sup> Ich iseie were soþ,  
 And þerfore þou were me loþ;  
 Gode gossip, ne be þou nouht<sup>18</sup> wroþ.'  
 'Wolf,' quod þe vox him þo, 30  
 'Al þat þou havest her bifore ido,

<sup>1</sup> bowed<sup>2</sup> groan<sup>3</sup> receive<sup>4</sup> one by one<sup>5</sup> remain<sup>6</sup> gladly, fain; MS. I fare<sup>7</sup> evil<sup>8</sup> of widows<sup>9</sup> curse<sup>10</sup> repents (it repents me = I repent)<sup>11</sup> say<sup>12</sup> make atonement<sup>13</sup> said evil of<sup>14</sup> went astray, sinned<sup>15</sup> you<sup>16</sup> saw; MS. ley<sup>17</sup> what<sup>18</sup> MS. nohut

- In pouht,<sup>1</sup> in speche, and in dede,  
 In euche oþeres kunnes<sup>2</sup> quede,  
 Ich þe forgeve at þisse nede.  
 'Crist þe forzelde !' þe wolf seide.  
 5 'Nou Ich am in clene live,  
 Ne recche Ich of childe ne of wive.  
 Ac sei me wat I shal do,  
 And ou<sup>3</sup> Ich may comen þe to.'  
 'Do?' quod þe vox. 'Ich wille þe lere.<sup>4</sup>  
 10 Isiist þou a boket hongy þere?  
 Þere is a bruche of hevene blisse.<sup>5</sup>  
 Lep þerinne, mid iwisse,  
 And þou shalt comen to me sone.'  
 Quod the wolf, 'þat is lizt to done.'  
 15 He lep in, and way<sup>6</sup> sumdel<sup>7</sup> —  
 þat weste<sup>8</sup> þe vox ful wel.  
 þe wolf gon sinke, þe vox arise;  
 þo gon þe wolf sore agrise.<sup>9</sup>  
 þo he com amidde þe putte,  
 20 þe wolfe þene vox opward<sup>10</sup> mette.  
 'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'wat nou?  
 Wat havest þou imunt<sup>11</sup>? weder wolt þou?'  
 'Weder Ich wille?' þe vox sede.  
 'Ich wille oup, so God me rede !  
 25 And nou go doun wiþ þi meel,<sup>12</sup>  
 þi bigete<sup>13</sup> worþ wel smal;  
 Ac Ich am þerof glad and bliþe,  
 þat þou art nomen<sup>14</sup> in clene live.  
 þi soule-cnul<sup>15</sup> Ich wille do ringe,  
 30 And masse for þine soule singe.'  
 þe wrecche bineþe noþing ne vind  
 Bote cold water, and hounger him bind;

<sup>1</sup> MS. þohut<sup>2</sup> of every other kind<sup>3</sup> how<sup>4</sup> teach<sup>5</sup> opening into (chance at) heaven's joy<sup>6</sup> weighed<sup>7</sup> somewhat<sup>8</sup> knew<sup>9</sup> to be alarmed<sup>10</sup> on his way up<sup>11</sup> meant, intended<sup>12</sup> toward thy meal<sup>13</sup> getting, spoil<sup>14</sup> taken<sup>15</sup> soul-knell

To colde gistninge <sup>1</sup> he wes ibede <sup>2</sup> ;  
 Vroggen <sup>8</sup> haveþ his dou iknede. <sup>4</sup>  
 Þe wolf in þe putte stod,  
 Afingret so þat he ves wod. <sup>5</sup>  
 Inou he cusede þat þider him broute ; 5  
 Þe vox þerof luitel route. <sup>6</sup>  
 Þe put him wes þe house ney,  
 Þer freren woneden swiþe sley. <sup>7</sup>  
 Þo þat hit com to þe time  
 Þat hoe shulden arisen ine, 10  
 For to suggen here houssong, <sup>8</sup>  
 O frere þere wes among,  
 Of here slep hem shulde awecche,  
 Wen hoe <sup>9</sup> shulden þidere recche. <sup>10</sup>  
 He seide : ' Ariseþ on and on, 15  
 And komeþ to houssong hevereuch on. '  
 Þis ilke frere heyte <sup>11</sup> Ailmer ;  
 He wes hoere maister curtiler. <sup>12</sup>  
 He wes hofþurst swiþe stronge ;  
 Rigt amidward here houssonge, 20  
 Alhone <sup>13</sup> to þe putte he hede, <sup>14</sup>  
 For he wende bete <sup>15</sup> his nede.  
 He com to þe putte, and drou,  
 And þe wolf wes hevi inou.  
 Þe frere mid al his maine <sup>16</sup> tey <sup>17</sup> 25  
 So longe þat <sup>18</sup> he þene wolf isey !  
 For he sei þene wolf þer sitte,  
 He gradde <sup>19</sup> : ' Þe devel is in þe putte ! '  
 To þe putte hy gounnen gon,  
 Alle mid pikes, and staves, and ston, 30  
 Euch mon mid þat he hedde ;

<sup>1</sup> feast<sup>2</sup> invited<sup>8</sup> frogs ; MS. wroggen<sup>4</sup> dough kneaded<sup>5</sup> mad, crazed<sup>6</sup> recked<sup>7</sup> shrewd<sup>8</sup> matins (OE. *ūhtsong*)<sup>9</sup> they<sup>10</sup> go<sup>11</sup> was named<sup>12</sup> gardener<sup>13</sup> alone<sup>14</sup> went<sup>15</sup> remedy, satisfy<sup>16</sup> strength (OE. *māgen* ; cf. modern 'might and main')<sup>17</sup> pulled, tugged<sup>18</sup> until<sup>19</sup> cried out

- Wo wes him þat wepne nedde.<sup>1</sup>  
 Hy comen to þe putte, þene wolf opdrowe<sup>2</sup>;  
 Þo hede þe wreche fomen inowe,  
 Þat weren egre him to slete<sup>3</sup>  
 5 Mid grete houndes, and to bete.  
 Wel and wrope he wes iswonge<sup>4</sup>;  
 Mid staves and speres he wes istounge.<sup>5</sup>  
 Þe wox bicharde<sup>6</sup> him, mid iwisse,  
 For he ne fond nones kunnes blisse,  
 10 Ne hof<sup>7</sup> dundes<sup>8</sup> forgivenesse.

### CHAUCEER, NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE: THE COCK AND THE FOX

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note to *Sir Thopas*, p. 108.

- A povre widwe, somdel stape<sup>9</sup> in age,  
 Was whylom<sup>10</sup> dwelling in a narwe cotage,  
 Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.  
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,  
 15 Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,  
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,  
 For litel was hir catel<sup>11</sup> and hir rente<sup>12</sup>;  
 By housbondrye<sup>13</sup> of such as God hir sente,  
 She found<sup>14</sup> herself, and eek hir doghtren two.  
 20 Three large sowes hadde she, and na mo,<sup>15</sup>  
 Three kyn,<sup>16</sup> and eek a sheep that highte Malle.  
 Ful sooty was hir bour,<sup>17</sup> and eek hir halle,  
 In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.  
 Of poynaunt sauce hir neded<sup>18</sup> never a deel<sup>19</sup>;

1 had not  
 2 drew up  
 3 tear  
 4 beaten  
 5 pierced  
 6 deceived  
 7 of

8 blows  
 9 advanced  
 10 once on a time  
 11 property  
 12 income  
 13 economy  
 14 supported

15 no more  
 16 cows  
 17 inner room, bedchamber  
 18 was necessary for her  
 19 not a bit



No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte ;  
 Hir dyete was accordant <sup>1</sup> to hir cote <sup>2</sup> —  
 Repleccioun ne made hir never syk ;  
 Attempree <sup>3</sup> dyete was al hir phisyk,  
 And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce. <sup>4</sup> 5  
 The goute lette <sup>5</sup> hir nothing <sup>6</sup> for to daunce,  
 N' apoplexye shente <sup>7</sup> nat hir heed ;  
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed ;  
 Hir bord <sup>8</sup> was served most with whyt and blak,  
 Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak, 10  
 Seynd <sup>9</sup> bacoun, and somtyme an ey <sup>10</sup> or tweye,  
 For she was as it were a maner <sup>11</sup> deye. <sup>12</sup>  
 A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute  
 With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,  
 In which she hadde a cok, hight <sup>13</sup> Chauntecleer. 15  
 In al the land of crowing nas <sup>14</sup> his peer ;  
 His vois was merier than the mery orgon  
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon ;  
 Wel sikerer <sup>15</sup> was his crowing in his logge <sup>16</sup>  
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey -orlogge. <sup>17</sup> 20  
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun  
 Of equinoxial <sup>18</sup> in thilke toun ;  
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended, <sup>19</sup>  
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.  
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral, 25  
 And batailed, <sup>20</sup> as it were a castel-wal ;  
 His bile <sup>21</sup> was blak, and as the jeet <sup>22</sup> it shoon ;  
 Lyk asur were his legges and his toon <sup>23</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> in consonance with<sup>2</sup> gown<sup>3</sup> moderate, temperate<sup>4</sup> a contented heart (heart's satisfaction)<sup>5</sup> prevented<sup>6</sup> not at all<sup>7</sup> injured<sup>8</sup> table<sup>9</sup> singed, broiled<sup>10</sup> egg<sup>11</sup> kind of<sup>12</sup> dairywoman<sup>13</sup> called<sup>14</sup> there was not<sup>15</sup> more trustworthy<sup>16</sup> lodge<sup>17</sup> clock<sup>18</sup> the equinoctial circle<sup>19</sup> when one hour was past<sup>20</sup> indented like a battlement<sup>21</sup> bill<sup>22</sup> jet<sup>23</sup> toes17. *orgon*: used here, as customarily at that time, in the plural.

His nayles whytter than the lillie-flour,  
 And lyk the burned<sup>1</sup> gold was his colour.  
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce  
 Sevene hennys, for to doon al his plesaunce,  
 5 Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,  
 And wonder lyk to him, as of<sup>2</sup> colours;  
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte  
 Was cleped faire Damoysele Pertelote.  
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,<sup>3</sup>  
 10 And compaignable,<sup>4</sup> and bar herself so faire,  
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,  
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold<sup>5</sup>  
 Of Chauntecleer, loken in every lith<sup>6</sup>;  
 He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.  
 15 But such a joye was it to here hem singe,  
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,  
 In swete accord, 'My lief is faren in londe.'  
 For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,  
 Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.  
 20 And so bifel that, in a daweninge,<sup>7</sup>  
 As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle  
 Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,  
 And next him sat this faire Pertelote,  
 This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,  
 25 As man that in his dreem is drecched<sup>8</sup> sore.  
 And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore  
 She was agast, and seyde: 'O herte dere,  
 What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?  
 Ye been a verray sleper, fy! for shame!'  
 30 And he answerde and seyde thus: 'Madame,  
 I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief<sup>9</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> burnished<sup>2</sup> as regards<sup>3</sup> well-mannered<sup>4</sup> companionable<sup>5</sup> in her possession<sup>6</sup> locked in every limb<sup>7</sup> dawn<sup>8</sup> troubled<sup>9</sup> amiss

17. My . . . londe: this is the first line of an old song, printed by Skeat in the *Athenæum* for October 24, 1896.

By God, me mette <sup>1</sup> I was in swich meschief  
 Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.  
 Now God,' quod he, 'my swevene <sup>2</sup> recche <sup>3</sup> aright,  
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun!  
 Me mette how that I romed up and down 5  
 Withinne our yerde, wheras <sup>4</sup> I saugh a beste,  
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste <sup>6</sup>  
 Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.  
 His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;  
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres, 10  
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres,  
 His snowte smal, with glowering eyen tweye.  
 Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;  
 This caused me my groning, doutelees.'  
 'Avoy <sup>6</sup>!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees! 15  
 Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that God above,  
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;  
 I can nat love a coward, by my feith!  
 For certes, what so any womman seith,  
 We alle desyren, if it mighte be, 20  
 To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,<sup>7</sup>  
 And secree,<sup>8</sup> and no nigard, ne no fool,  
 Ne him that is agast of every tool,<sup>9</sup>  
 Ne noon avauntour,<sup>10</sup> by that God above!  
 How dorste ye seyn for shame — unto your love — 25  
 That any thing mighte make yow aferd?  
 Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?  
 Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?  
 Nothing, God wot, but vanitee in sweven is:  
 Swevenes engendren of <sup>11</sup> replecciouns,<sup>12</sup> 30  
 And ofte of fume,<sup>13</sup> and of complecciouns,<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I dreamed<sup>2</sup> dream<sup>3</sup> bring to a good issue (*lit.*  
interpret)<sup>4</sup> where<sup>6</sup> arrest<sup>6</sup> fie (OF. *avoit*)<sup>7</sup> generous<sup>8</sup> trustworthy<sup>9</sup> instrument, weapon<sup>10</sup> boaster<sup>11</sup> are produced by<sup>12</sup> surfeits<sup>13</sup> noxious vapor rising from  
stomach to brain<sup>14</sup> the combination of the  
four humors of the body  
in certain proportions

Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.  
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met <sup>1</sup> to-night,  
 Cometh of the grete superfluitee  
 Of youre rede *colera*,<sup>2</sup> pardee,  
 5 Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes  
 Of arwes,<sup>3</sup> and of fyr with rede lemes,<sup>4</sup>  
 Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,  
 Of kontek,<sup>5</sup> and of whelpes <sup>6</sup> grete and lyte <sup>7</sup> ;  
 Right as the humour of malencolye  
 10 Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,  
 For fere of blake beres, or boles <sup>8</sup> blake,  
 Or elles blake develes wole hem take.  
 Of othere humours coude I telle also,  
 That werken many a man in sleep ful wo ;  
 15 But I wol passe as lightly as I can.  
 Lo Catoun,<sup>9</sup> which that was so wys a man,  
 Seyde he nat thus, Ne do no fors of <sup>10</sup> dremes ?  
 Now, sire, quod she, ' whan we flee fro the bemes,  
 For Goddes love, as tak <sup>11</sup> som laxatyf ;  
 20 Up <sup>12</sup> peril of my soule and of my lyf,  
 I counseille yow the beste — I wol nat lye —  
 That bothe of colere and of malencolye  
 Ye purge yow ; and, for <sup>13</sup> ye shul nat tarie,  
 Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,  
 25 I shal myself to herbes techen <sup>14</sup> yow,  
 That shul ben for your heale <sup>15</sup> and for your prow <sup>16</sup> ;  
 And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,  
 The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,<sup>17</sup>  
 To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.  
 30 Forget not this, for Goddes owene love !  
 Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun ;

<sup>1</sup> dreamed<sup>2</sup> one of the four so-called humors<sup>3</sup> arrows<sup>4</sup> flames<sup>5</sup> strife, contest<sup>6</sup> dogs<sup>7</sup> small<sup>8</sup> bulls<sup>9</sup> *Dionysii Catonis Disticha  
de Moribus ad Filium*<sup>10</sup> pay no heed to<sup>11</sup> pray take<sup>12</sup> on<sup>13</sup> in order that<sup>14</sup> direct<sup>15</sup> healing<sup>16</sup> profit<sup>17</sup> nature

Ware<sup>1</sup> the sonne in his ascencioun  
 Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote ;  
 And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,<sup>2</sup>  
 That ye shul have a fevere terciane<sup>3</sup>  
 Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 5  
 A day or two ye shul have digestyves  
 Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,  
 Of lauriol,<sup>4</sup> centaure,<sup>5</sup> and fumetere,<sup>6</sup>  
 Or elles of ellebor<sup>7</sup> that groweth there,  
 Of catapuce<sup>8</sup> or of gaytres beryis,<sup>9</sup> 10  
 Of erbe yve,<sup>10</sup> growing in our yerd, ther mery is ;  
 Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.  
 Be mery, housbond, for your fader<sup>11</sup> kin !  
 Dredeth no dreem ; I can say yow namore.'  
 'Madame,' quod he, 'graunt mercy<sup>12</sup> of your lore ! 15  
 But nathelees, as touching daun<sup>13</sup> Catoun,  
 That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,  
 Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,  
 By God, men may in olde bokes rede  
 Of many a man, more of auctoritee 20  
 Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,<sup>14</sup>  
 That al the revers<sup>15</sup> seyn of his sentence,<sup>16</sup>  
 And han wel founden by experience  
 That dremes ben significaciouns  
 As wel of joye as tribulaciouns 25  
 That folk enduren in this lyf present.  
 Ther nedeth make of this noon argument ;  
 The verray preve<sup>17</sup> sheweth it in dede.  
 Oon of the gretteste auctours<sup>18</sup> that men rede  
 Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente 30  
 On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente ;

<sup>1</sup> beware lest<sup>2</sup> groat<sup>3</sup> tertian<sup>4</sup> spurge-laurel<sup>5</sup> centaury<sup>6</sup> fumitory<sup>7</sup> hellebore<sup>8</sup> lesser spurge (caper spurge)<sup>9</sup> dogwood berries (some-  
times those of other  
similar shrubs)<sup>10</sup> herb ivy (ground pine?)<sup>11</sup> father's<sup>12</sup> great thanks (gramercy)<sup>13</sup> lord, sir (Lat. *dominus*)<sup>14</sup> so may I prosper<sup>15</sup> opposite<sup>16</sup> opinion<sup>17</sup> proof<sup>18</sup> Cicero, in his *De Divina-  
tione*

And happed so, thay come into a toun  
 Wheras ther was swich congregacioun<sup>1</sup>  
 Of peple, and<sup>2</sup> eek so streit<sup>3</sup> of herbergage,<sup>4</sup>  
 That they ne founde as muche as o<sup>5</sup> cotage  
 5 In which they bothe mighte ylogged<sup>6</sup> be.  
 Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,  
 As for that night, departen<sup>7</sup> compaignye;  
 And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,  
 And took his logging as it wolde falle.<sup>8</sup>  
 10 That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,  
 Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;  
 That other man was logged wel ynough,  
 As was his aventure,<sup>9</sup> or his fortune,  
 That us governeth alle as in commune.<sup>10</sup>  
 15 And so bifel that, longe er it were day,  
 This man mette in his bed, ther as<sup>11</sup> he lay,  
 How that his felawe gan upon him calle,  
 And seyde: "Allas! for in an oxes stalle  
 This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.  
 20 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;  
 In alle haste com to me," he sayde.  
 This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde<sup>12</sup>;  
 But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,  
 He turned him, and took of this no keep<sup>13</sup>;  
 25 Him thoughte<sup>14</sup> his dreem nas but a vanitee.<sup>15</sup>  
 Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he;  
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe  
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide: "I am now slawe<sup>16</sup>;  
 Bihold my blody woundes, depe and wyde!  
 30 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,<sup>17</sup>  
 And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,

<sup>1</sup> concourse, gathering<sup>2</sup> *supply* which was<sup>3</sup> scanty<sup>4</sup> lodgings<sup>5</sup> one<sup>6</sup> lodged<sup>7</sup> part<sup>8</sup> happen<sup>9</sup> chance<sup>10</sup> general<sup>11</sup> where<sup>12</sup> started up<sup>13</sup> notice, heed<sup>14</sup> it seemed to him that<sup>15</sup> delusion<sup>16</sup> slain<sup>17</sup> morning

"A carte ful of dong<sup>1</sup> ther shaltow see,  
 In which my body is hid ful prively;  
 Do<sup>2</sup> thilke carte aresten<sup>3</sup> boldely.  
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;"  
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn, 5  
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.  
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;  
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,  
 To his felawes in<sup>4</sup> he took the way;  
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle, 10  
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.  
 The hostiler<sup>5</sup> answerde him anon,  
 And seyde: "Sire, your felawe is agon;  
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun."  
 This man gan fallen in suspecioun, 15  
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,  
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,<sup>6</sup>  
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond  
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge<sup>7</sup> lond,  
 That was arrayed in the same wyse 20  
 As ye han herd the dede man devyse<sup>8</sup>;  
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye  
 Vengeaunce and justice of<sup>9</sup> this felonye:  
 "My felawe mordred is this same night,  
 And in this carte he lyth<sup>10</sup> gapinge upright.<sup>11</sup> 25  
 I crye out on the ministres," quod he,  
 "That sholden kepe<sup>12</sup> and reulen<sup>13</sup> this citee;  
 Harrow<sup>14</sup>! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!"  
 What sholde I more unto this tale sayn?  
 The peple outsterte,<sup>15</sup> and caste the cart to grounde, 30  
 And in the middel of the dong they founde

<sup>1</sup> dung<sup>2</sup> cause<sup>3</sup> to be stopped<sup>4</sup> inn<sup>5</sup> innkeeper<sup>6</sup> delay<sup>7</sup> cover with manure<sup>8</sup> relate<sup>9</sup> for<sup>10</sup> lieth<sup>11</sup> on his back<sup>12</sup> watch over<sup>13</sup> rule<sup>14</sup> a cry of distress<sup>15</sup> started out

The dede man, that mordred was al newe.<sup>1</sup>  
 O blisful God, that art so just and trewe !  
 Lo, how that thou biwreyest<sup>2</sup> mordre alway !  
 Mordre wol out — that see we day by day.  
 5 Mordre is so wlatson<sup>3</sup> and abhominable  
 To God, that is so just and resonable,  
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled<sup>4</sup> be ;  
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,  
 Mordre wol out — this 's my conclusioun.  
 10 And right anoon, ministres of that toun  
 Han hent<sup>5</sup> the carter, and so sore him pyned,<sup>6</sup>  
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,<sup>7</sup>  
 That thay biknewe<sup>8</sup> hir wikkednesse anoon,  
 And were anhangen by the nekke-boon.  
 15 Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.  
 And certes, in the same book I rede,  
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this  
 — I gabbe<sup>9</sup> nat, so have I joye or blis —  
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,  
 20 For certeyn cause, into a fer contree,  
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,  
 That made hem in a citee for to tarie,  
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.  
 But on a day, agayn<sup>10</sup> the eventyde,  
 25 The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.<sup>11</sup>  
 Jolif<sup>12</sup> and glad they wente unto hir reste,  
 And casten<sup>13</sup> hem ful erly for to saille ;  
 But to that oo<sup>14</sup> man fil<sup>15</sup> a greet mervaille.  
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,  
 30 Him mette a wonder drem, agayn<sup>10</sup> the day :  
 Him thoughte<sup>16</sup> a man stood by his beddes syde,

<sup>1</sup> recently<sup>2</sup> dost make manifest, bring to light<sup>3</sup> heinous<sup>4</sup> concealed<sup>5</sup> seized<sup>6</sup> tortured<sup>7</sup> racked<sup>8</sup> confessed<sup>9</sup> lie<sup>10</sup> towards<sup>11</sup> was agreeable to them<sup>12</sup> in good spirits<sup>13</sup> proposed<sup>14</sup> one<sup>15</sup> befell<sup>16</sup> it seemed to him



And him comaunded that he sholde abyde,  
 And seyde him thus: "If thou to-morwe wende,  
 Thou shalt be dreynt<sup>1</sup>; my tale is at an ende."  
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,  
 And preyde him his viage<sup>2</sup> for to lette<sup>3</sup>; 5  
 As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.  
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,  
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.  
 "No dreem," quod he, "may so myn herte agaste,  
 That I wol lette for to do my thinges.<sup>4</sup> 10  
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,  
 For swevenes been but vanitees and japes<sup>5</sup>:  
 Men dreme alday<sup>6</sup> of owles or of apes,  
 And eke of many a mase<sup>7</sup> therwithal;  
 Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.<sup>8</sup> 15  
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,  
 And thus forsleuthen<sup>9</sup> wilfully thy tyde,<sup>10</sup>  
 God wot it reweth me<sup>11</sup>; and have good day."  
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.  
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours yseyled, 20  
 Noot I<sup>12</sup> nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,<sup>18</sup>  
 But casuelly<sup>14</sup> the shippes botme<sup>15</sup> rente,<sup>16</sup>  
 And ship and man under the water wente,  
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,  
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde. 25  
 And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,  
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,<sup>17</sup>  
 That no man sholde been to recchelees<sup>18</sup>  
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,  
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede. 30  
 Lo, in the lyf of Seint Kenelm I rede —

<sup>1</sup> drowned<sup>2</sup> journey<sup>3</sup> abandon, give up<sup>4</sup> business affairs<sup>5</sup> jests, tricks<sup>6</sup> continually<sup>7</sup> bewildering situation<sup>8</sup> shall be<sup>9</sup> waste in sloth<sup>10</sup> time<sup>11</sup> I am sorry<sup>12</sup> I know not<sup>13</sup> (there) ailed<sup>14</sup> by accident<sup>15</sup> bottom<sup>16</sup> split<sup>17</sup> mayst thou learn<sup>18</sup> heedless

That was Kenulphus<sup>1</sup> sone, the noble king  
 Of Mercenrike<sup>2</sup> — how Kenelm mette a thing ;  
 A lyte<sup>3</sup> er he was mordred, on a day,  
 His mordre in his avisioun<sup>4</sup> he say.<sup>5</sup>  
 5 His norice<sup>6</sup> him expounded<sup>7</sup> every del<sup>8</sup>  
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe<sup>9</sup> him wel  
 For<sup>10</sup> traisoun ; but he nas but seven yeer old,  
 And therfore litel tale hath he told<sup>11</sup>  
 Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.  
 10 By God, I hadde lever than my sherte  
 That ye had rad his legende, as have I.  
 Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,  
 Macrobeus, that writ th' avisioun  
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou, n,  
 15 Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been  
 Warning of thinges that men after<sup>12</sup> seen.  
 And forthermore, I pray yow loketh wel  
 In the Olde Testament, of<sup>13</sup> Daniel,  
 If he held dremes any vanitee.  
 20 Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see  
 Wher<sup>14</sup> dremes ben somtyme — I sey nat alle —  
 Warning of thinges that shul after falle.  
 Loke of Egipt the king, Daun Pharao,  
 His bakere and his boteler also,  
 25 Wher<sup>14</sup> they ne felte noon effect<sup>15</sup> in dremes.  
 Whoso wol seken actes of sondry remes,<sup>16</sup>  
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.  
 Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde<sup>17</sup> king,  
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,

<sup>1</sup> Kenulf (died 819)<sup>2</sup> Mercia<sup>3</sup> little<sup>4</sup> vision<sup>5</sup> saw<sup>6</sup> nurse<sup>7</sup> explained<sup>8</sup> bit<sup>9</sup> guard<sup>10</sup> against<sup>11</sup> account hath he made<sup>12</sup> afterwards<sup>13</sup> as to<sup>14</sup> whether<sup>15</sup> reality<sup>16</sup> realms<sup>17</sup> Lydia

13. avisioun : the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, with a commentary by Macrobius.

29. For this dream, cf. the *Monk's Tale*.

Which signified he sholde anhangd be ?  
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores <sup>1</sup> wyf,  
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,  
 She dremed on the same night biforn  
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,<sup>2</sup> 5  
 If thilke day he wente into bataille.  
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle ;  
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,  
 But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.  
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle, 10  
 And eek it is ny <sup>3</sup> day, I may nat dwelle.<sup>4</sup>  
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,  
 That I shal han of this avisioun  
 Adversitee ; and I seye, forthermore,  
 That I ne telle <sup>5</sup> of laxatyves no store, 15  
 For they ben venimous,<sup>6</sup> I woot it wel ;  
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.<sup>7</sup>  
 Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte <sup>8</sup> al this ;  
 Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,  
 Of o thing God hath sent me large grace ; 20  
 For whan I see the beautee of your face,  
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,<sup>9</sup>  
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen ;  
 For, also siker <sup>10</sup> as *In principio*,<sup>11</sup>  
*Mulier est hominis confusio* ; 25  
 Madame, the sentence<sup>12</sup> of this Latin is :  
 " Womman is mannes joye and al his blis."  
 For whan I fele anight <sup>13</sup> your softe syde, . . .<sup>14</sup>  
 I am so ful of joye and of solas  
 That I defye bothe sweven and drem.' 30  
 And with that word he fleydoun fro the beem,

<sup>1</sup> Hector's<sup>2</sup> lost<sup>3</sup> nearly<sup>4</sup> continue<sup>5</sup> set<sup>6</sup> poisonous<sup>7</sup> never a whit<sup>8</sup> cease<sup>9</sup> eyes<sup>10</sup> sure<sup>11</sup> John 1. 1<sup>12</sup> meaning<sup>13</sup> by night<sup>14</sup> Two lines omitted

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle ;  
 And with a chuk<sup>1</sup> he gan hem for to calle,  
 For he had founde a corn, lay<sup>2</sup> in the yerd ;  
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd. . . .<sup>8</sup>

5 He loketh as it were a grim leoun ;  
 And on his toos he rometh up and doun,  
 Him deyned<sup>4</sup> not to sette his foot to grounde.  
 He chukketh whan he hath a corn yfounde,  
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.  
 10 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,  
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture ;  
 And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the month in which the world bigan,  
 That highte March, whan God first maked man,  
 15 Was complet, and [y]passed were also,  
 Sin March was goon,<sup>6</sup> [wel] thritty dayes and two,  
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,  
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,  
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,  
 20 That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne<sup>9</sup>  
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more ;  
 And knew by kynde,<sup>7</sup> and by noon other lore,<sup>8</sup>  
 That it was pryme,<sup>9</sup> and crew with blisful stevene.<sup>10</sup>  
 ' The sonne,' he sayde, ' is clomben up on hevene  
 25 Fourty degrees and oon, and more, ywis.  
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,  
 Herkneþ thise<sup>11</sup> blisful briddes how they singe,  
 And see the fresshe floures how they springe ;  
 Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'  
 30 But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cluck<sup>2</sup> that lay<sup>8</sup> Two lines omitted<sup>4</sup> he deigned<sup>5</sup> MS. bigan (*for* was goon)<sup>6</sup> run, progressed<sup>7</sup> nature<sup>8</sup> teaching<sup>9</sup> about 9 A.M.<sup>10</sup> voice, sound<sup>11</sup> these<sup>12</sup> misfortune

14. maked : this was a mediæval idea.

16. This would make the date May 3.

For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.  
 God woot that worldly joye is sone ago<sup>1</sup>;  
 And if a rethor<sup>2</sup> coude faire endyte,<sup>3</sup>  
 He in a cronique<sup>4</sup> sauffy<sup>5</sup> mighte it wryte,  
 As for a sovereyn notabilitee.<sup>6</sup> 5  
 Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;  
 This storie is also trewe, I undertake,  
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,  
 That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.  
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.<sup>7</sup> 10  
 A colfox,<sup>8</sup> ful of sly iniquitee,  
 That in the grove hadde woned<sup>9</sup> yeres three,  
 By<sup>10</sup> heigh imaginacioun forncast,<sup>11</sup>  
 The same night thurghout the hegges<sup>12</sup> brast<sup>13</sup>  
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire 15  
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;  
 And in a bed of wortes<sup>14</sup> stille he lay,  
 Til it was passed undern<sup>15</sup> of the day,  
 Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,  
 As gladly<sup>16</sup> doon thise<sup>17</sup> homicydes alle, 20  
 That in awayt<sup>18</sup> liggen<sup>19</sup> to mordre men.  
 O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!  
 O newe Scariot,<sup>20</sup> newe Genilon<sup>21</sup>!  
 False dissimilour,<sup>22</sup> O Greek Simon,  
 That broghtest Troye al outrely<sup>23</sup> to sorwe! 25  
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,  
 That thou into that yerd flough<sup>24</sup> fro the bemes!  
 Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes  
 That thilke day was perilous to thee,

<sup>1</sup> past<sup>2</sup> skilled writer<sup>3</sup> compose<sup>4</sup> chronicle<sup>5</sup> safely<sup>6</sup> supremely notable fact<sup>7</sup> subject<sup>8</sup> brant fox (having a large inter-  
mixture of black in its fur)<sup>9</sup> dwelt<sup>10</sup> as a result of<sup>11</sup> premeditated<sup>12</sup> hedges<sup>13</sup> burst<sup>14</sup> herbs<sup>15</sup> about 11 A.M.<sup>16</sup> generally<sup>17</sup> these<sup>18</sup> waiting<sup>19</sup> lie<sup>20</sup> Iscariot<sup>21</sup> Ganelon, who betrayed  
Roland<sup>22</sup> dissembler<sup>23</sup> utterly<sup>24</sup> flew

But what that <sup>1</sup> God forwoot <sup>2</sup> mot nedes be,  
 After <sup>3</sup> the opinioun of certeyn clerkis ;  
 Witnesse on him that any perfit clerk is  
 That in scole is gret altercacioun  
 5 In this matere, and greet disputisoun,  
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.  
 But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,<sup>4</sup>  
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn,  
 Or Boëce,<sup>5</sup> or the bishop Bradwardyn,<sup>6</sup>  
 10 Whether that Goddes worthy forwiting <sup>7</sup>  
 Streyneth <sup>8</sup> me nedely <sup>9</sup> for to doon a thing  
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee) ;  
 Or elles, if free choys be graunted me  
 To do that same thing, or do it noght,  
 15 Though God forwoot it er that it was wrought ;  
 Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del  
 But by necessitee condicionel.  
 I wol not han to do of swich matere ;  
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,  
 20 That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,  
 To walken in the yerd upon that morwe  
 That he had met <sup>10</sup> the dreem that I yow tolde.  
 Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde <sup>11</sup> :  
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,  
 25 And made Adam fro Paradys to go,  
 Ther as <sup>12</sup> he was ful mery, and wel at ese.  
 But for <sup>13</sup> I noot <sup>14</sup> to whom it mighte displese,  
 If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,  
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.<sup>15</sup>  
 30 Rede auctours wher they trete of swich matere,

<sup>1</sup> that which<sup>2</sup> foreknows<sup>3</sup> according to<sup>4</sup> bolt it to the bran, sift  
it thoroughly<sup>5</sup> Boethius<sup>6</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury in the four-  
teenth century, and a divinity pro-  
fessor and chancellor of Oxford<sup>7</sup> foreknowledge<sup>8</sup> compels, constrains<sup>9</sup> necessarily<sup>10</sup> dreamed<sup>11</sup> disastrous<sup>12</sup> where<sup>13</sup> since<sup>14</sup> know not<sup>15</sup> fun, sport

17. Conditional necessity, according to Boethius, implies knowledge: if one knows that a man is walking, then he is, necessarily, walking.

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.  
 Thise <sup>1</sup> been <sup>2</sup> the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;  
 I can <sup>3</sup> noon harm of no womman divyne.

Faire in the sond,<sup>4</sup> to bathe hir merily,  
 Lyth <sup>5</sup> Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by, 5  
 Agayn <sup>6</sup> the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free  
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see —  
 For *Physiologus* seith sikerly  
 How that they singen wel and merily.  
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yë, 10  
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,  
 He was war <sup>7</sup> of this fox that lay ful lowe.  
 Nothing ne liste him <sup>8</sup> thanne for to crowe,  
 But cryde anon, 'Cok, cok,' and up he sterte,  
 As man that was affrayed in his herte; 15  
 For naturelly a beest desyreth flee  
 Fro his contrarie,<sup>9</sup> if he may it see,  
 Though he never erst <sup>10</sup> had seyn it with his yë.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,  
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon 20  
 Seyde: 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?  
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?  
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,<sup>11</sup>  
 If I to yow wolde <sup>12</sup> harm or vileinye.  
 I am nat come your counseil for t' espye; 25  
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge  
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe,  
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene <sup>13</sup>  
 As eny aungel hath that is in hevene;  
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinge 30  
 Than hadde Boëce,<sup>14</sup> or any that can singe.

<sup>1</sup> these  
<sup>2</sup> are  
<sup>3</sup> know  
<sup>4</sup> sand  
<sup>5</sup> lieth

<sup>6</sup> exposed to  
<sup>7</sup> aware  
<sup>8</sup> it pleased him not at all  
<sup>9</sup> opposite, foe  
<sup>10</sup> before

<sup>11</sup> fiend, devil  
<sup>12</sup> wished  
<sup>13</sup> voice  
<sup>14</sup> Boethius wrote a treatise,  
*De Musica*

My lord your fader — God his soule blesse ! —  
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,  
 Han in myn hous ybeen, to my gret ese <sup>1</sup> ;  
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.  
 5 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye —  
 So mote I brouke <sup>2</sup> wel myn eyen tweye ! —  
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe,  
 As dide your fader in the morweninge ;  
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.  
 10 And, for to make his voys the more strong,  
 He wolde so peyne him <sup>3</sup> that with bothe his yën  
 He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,  
 And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,  
 And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.  
 15 And eek he was of swich discrecioun  
 That ther nas no man in no regioun  
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.  
 I have wel rad in *Daun Burnel the Asse*,  
 Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,  
 20 For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok  
 Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce, <sup>4</sup>  
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.  
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun  
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun  
 25 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.  
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee ;  
 Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete <sup>5</sup> ?  
 This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,  
 As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,  
 30 So was he ravissed with his flaterye.  
 Allas ! ye lordes, many a fals flatour <sup>6</sup>  
 Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour, <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> delight<sup>2</sup> enjoy<sup>3</sup> take such pains<sup>4</sup> foolish<sup>5</sup> imitate<sup>6</sup> flatterer<sup>7</sup> deceiver

18. Nigellus Wireker wrote the *Burnellus*, or *Speculum Stultorum*, in the twelfth century.



That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,  
 Than he that soothfastnesse<sup>1</sup> unto yow seith.  
 Redeth Ecclesiaste<sup>2</sup> of<sup>3</sup> flaterye;  
 Beth war,<sup>4</sup> ye lordes, of hir<sup>5</sup> trecherye.  
 This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos, 5  
 Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,<sup>6</sup>  
 And gan to crowe loude for the nones<sup>7</sup>;  
 And Daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,  
 And by the gargat<sup>8</sup> hente<sup>9</sup> Chauntecleer,  
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer,<sup>10</sup> 10  
 For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.<sup>11</sup>  
 O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed<sup>12</sup>!  
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!  
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte<sup>13</sup> nat of dremes!  
 And on a Friday fil<sup>14</sup> al this meschaunce. 15  
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,  
 Sin<sup>15</sup> that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,  
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,  
 More for delyt, than world to multiplye,  
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye? 20  
 O Gaufred,<sup>16</sup> dere mayster soverayn,  
 That, whan thy worthy King Richard was slayn  
 With shot, compleynedest<sup>17</sup> his deth so sore,  
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence<sup>18</sup> and thy lore,  
 The Friday for to chyde,<sup>19</sup> as diden ye 25  
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he)?  
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne<sup>20</sup>  
 For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.  
 Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun  
 Was never of ladies maad whan Ilioun 30

1 truth  
 2 Ecclesiasticus 12. 10, 11, 16  
 3 on  
 4 beware  
 5 their  
 6 closed  
 7 for the occasion

8 throat  
 9 seized  
 10 bore  
 11 pursued  
 12 escaped  
 13 recked  
 14 happened

15 since  
 16 Geoffrey de Vinsauf  
 17 didst lament  
 18 judgment  
 19 blame  
 20 lament

Was wonne, and Pirrus <sup>1</sup> with his streite <sup>2</sup> swerd,  
 Whan he hadde hent King Priam by the berd,  
 And slayn him — as saith us *Eneydos*—  
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos,<sup>3</sup>  
 5 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.  
 But. sovereynly <sup>4</sup> Dame Pertelote shrighthe,<sup>5</sup>  
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales <sup>6</sup> wyf  
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,  
 And that the Romayns hadde brend <sup>7</sup> Cartage;  
 10 She was so ful of torment and of rage  
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,  
 And brende herselven with a stedfast herte.  
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye  
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee  
 15 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,  
 For that hir <sup>8</sup> housbondes losten alle hir lyves;  
 Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.  
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.  
 This sely <sup>9</sup> widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,  
 20 Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo;  
 And out at dores sterten they anoon,  
 And syen the fox toward the grove goon,  
 And bar upon his bak the cok away;  
 And cryden, ' Out <sup>10</sup> ! harrow <sup>11</sup> ! and weylaway !  
 25 Ha, ha, the fox ! ' and after him they ran,  
 And eek with staves many another man;  
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,  
 And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;  
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges—  
 30 So were they fered <sup>12</sup> for berking of the dogges  
 And shouting of the men and wimmen eke;  
 They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.

<sup>1</sup> Pyrrhus  
<sup>2</sup> drawn  
<sup>3</sup> enclosure  
<sup>4</sup> most of all  
<sup>5</sup> shrieked

<sup>6</sup> General of Carthage, when it was  
 burned  
<sup>7</sup> burned  
<sup>8</sup> their  
<sup>9</sup> good

<sup>10</sup> alas  
<sup>11</sup> help  
<sup>12</sup> frightened

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle ;  
 The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle<sup>1</sup> ;  
 The gees for fere flowen over the trees ;  
 Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees ;  
 So hidous was the noyse, a! benedicite<sup>2</sup> ! 5  
 Certes he, Jakke Straw,<sup>3</sup> and his meynee,<sup>4</sup>  
 Ne made never shoutes half so shrille  
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming<sup>5</sup> kille,  
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.  
 Of bras thay broghten bemes,<sup>6</sup> and of box,<sup>7</sup> 10  
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,<sup>8</sup>  
 And therwithal thay shryked and they houped,<sup>9</sup>  
 It semed as that heven sholde falle.  
 Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle !  
 Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly 15  
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy !  
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,  
 In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,  
 And seyde : ' Sire, if that I were as ye,  
 Yet sholde I seyn — as wis God helpe me ! — 20  
 " Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle !  
 A verray pestilence upon yow falle !  
 Now am I come unto this wodes syde,  
 Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde ;  
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon." ' 25  
 The fox answerde : ' In feith, it shal be don ; '  
 And as he spak that word, al sodeinly  
 This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,<sup>10</sup>  
 And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon.  
 And whan the fox saugh that he was ygon, 30  
 ' Allas ! ' quod he, ' O Chauntecleer, allas !  
 I have to yow,' quod he, ' ydoon trespas,  
 Inasmuche as I maked yow aferd,

<sup>1</sup> kill<sup>2</sup> bless us ; *pron.* bencité<sup>3</sup> (in the rebellion of 1381)<sup>4</sup> followers<sup>5</sup> any Flemish merchant in

London

<sup>6</sup> trumpets<sup>7</sup> boxwood<sup>8</sup> tooted<sup>9</sup> whooped<sup>10</sup> nimble, skilfully

Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd ;  
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente ;  
 Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente ;  
 I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so.'

5 'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe<sup>1</sup> us bothe two,  
 And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,  
 If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.

Thou shalt namore, thurgh thy flaterye,  
 Do me to singe and winke with myn yë.  
 10 For he that winketh whan he sholde see,  
 Al wilfully, God lat him never thee<sup>2</sup> !'

'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yeve him meschaunce  
 That is so undiscreet of governaunce,  
 That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees !'

15 Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees<sup>3</sup>  
 And negligent, and truste on flaterye !  
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,  
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,  
 Taketh the moralitee, good men ;  
 20 For Seint Paul seith<sup>4</sup> that al that writen is,  
 To our doctryne it is ywrite, ywis.  
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.

Now, gode God, if that it be thy wille,  
 As seith my lord,<sup>5</sup> so make us alle good men,  
 25 And bringe us to his heighe blisse ! Amen.

<sup>1</sup> curse<sup>2</sup> prosper<sup>3</sup> heedless<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim. 3. 16<sup>5</sup> the Archbishop of Canterbury, as  
 a manuscript note explains

Selections from  
Layamon's Brut  
Translation

## CHRONICLES

### LAYAMON, BRUT

Our chief information concerning Layamon is derived from the first extract printed below. In the later manuscript, 'Lazamon' is 'Laweman'; and indeed the word means 'lawman,' a kind of magistrate. 'Ernleze' is Ar(e)ley Regis, or King's Ar(e)ley, just south of Stourport, where the Stour joins the Severn, and about ten miles north (slightly northwest) of Worcester. 'Radestone' is Redstone, a high cliff in the neighborhood.

Layamon goes on to say that it came into his mind to relate the history of England from the beginning, and that, in order to this, he journeyed up and down the country to procure the books he needed. Though he carries his story only down to 689, it consists of some 16,120 long lines, written about 1205. His chief source was Wace's *Roman de Brut* (1205), yet the earlier manuscript of Layamon contains, according to B. S. Monroe (*Modern Philology* 4. 567), only 87 French words. In common with Wace, or rather through Wace, he is ultimately dependent on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Histories of the Kings of Britain* (before 1148), the ultimate source of so much romance dealing with 'the matter of Britain.' Geoffrey's book has been excellently translated by Sebastian Evans (Temple Classics). *Also in M.L.*

Of the two manuscripts, the second may be a half century or so later than the first. Our extracts are taken from the first, as given in the standard edition, Madden's (3 vols., London, 1847), with the latter's short lines printed as long ones (but Madden's numbering is retained). For further information, see the preface to Madden's edition; the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 260-4; Monroe, *Jour. Eng. and Germ. Phil.* 7. 139-41 (bibliography).

### LAYAMON'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

Lines 1-10 (Madden 1. 1)

An preost<sup>1</sup> wes on leoden,<sup>2</sup> Lazamon wes ihoten<sup>3</sup>;  
He wes Leovenaðes sone — liðe<sup>4</sup> him beo Drihten<sup>5</sup>!  
He wonede<sup>6</sup> at Ernleze, at æðelen<sup>7</sup> are<sup>8</sup> chirechen,<sup>9</sup>  
Uppen Sevarne staþe<sup>10</sup> — sel<sup>11</sup> par him puhte<sup>12</sup> —  
On fest<sup>13</sup> Radestone; þer he bock radde.<sup>14</sup>

5

1 priest  
2 among the people  
3 named  
4 merciful

5 the Lord  
6 lived  
7 noble  
8 a

9 church  
10 bank  
11 good, pleasant  
12 seemed

13 hard by  
14 read

## THE PROPHECY OF DIANA

Lines 1097-1252 (Madden 1. 47-53). Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Book I, chap. 11, and Milton's translation of it in his *History of Britain*.

- Brutus nom <sup>1</sup> Ignogen, and into scipe lædde.  
 Heo <sup>2</sup> rihten <sup>3</sup> heora rapes, heo rærden <sup>4</sup> heora mastes,  
 Heo wunden up seiles; wind stod <sup>5</sup> an willen. <sup>6</sup>  
 Sixtene siðe <sup>7</sup> tuenti scipen tuhten <sup>8</sup> from havene,  
 5 And feower scipen greate þe weren grundladene <sup>9</sup>  
 Mid þat beste wepnen þa Brutus havede.  
 Heo fusden <sup>10</sup> from stronde ut of Griclonde <sup>11</sup>;  
 Heo wenden ut i wide sæ; þa wilde <sup>12</sup> wurðen itemede. <sup>13</sup>  
 Tweiȝe dawes and tua niht inne sæ weren;  
 10 Þen oðer <sup>14</sup> dai heo comen liðen <sup>15</sup> on æven to londe.  
 Logice <sup>16</sup> hatte <sup>17</sup> þat eitlond <sup>18</sup>; leode <sup>19</sup> nere þar nane —  
 Ne wapmen <sup>20</sup> ne wifmen — buten <sup>21</sup> westiȝe <sup>22</sup> pæðes. <sup>23</sup>  
 Utlagen <sup>24</sup> hefden iræved <sup>25</sup> þat lond, and alle þa leoden ofslagen <sup>26</sup>;  
 And swa hit wes al west, <sup>27</sup> and wnnen <sup>28</sup> biræved,  
 15 Ah <sup>29</sup> swa monie þar waren wilde deor <sup>30</sup> þat wnder <sup>31</sup> heom puhte <sup>32</sup>;  
 And þa Troinisc men tuhten to þon deoren,  
 And duden of þan wilden al heora iwilla. <sup>33</sup>  
 To þan scipen wælden. <sup>34</sup>  
 Heo funden i þon eitlonde ane burh <sup>35</sup> swiðe stronge;  
 20 Tohælde <sup>36</sup> weoren þe walles, weste weren hallen.  
 Temple heo funden þar ane, imaked of marmestæne,  
 Muchel and mære <sup>37</sup>; þe wrse <sup>38</sup> hit hafde to welden. <sup>39</sup>

1 took

2 they

3 put in order

4 raised

5 MS. ston

6 was favorable

7 times

8 departed

9 deeply laden

10 hastened

11 Greece

12 wild (men)

13 tamed

14 next

15 voyaging

16 Leogecia; position unknown

17 high

18 eyotland (island)

19 people

20 men

21 only

22 desert

23 MS. pædes

24 outlaws

25 devastated

26 slain

27 waste

28 (of) habitations

29 but

30 animals

31 wonder

32 seemed

33 will

34 carried

35 city

36 tottering

37 glorious

38 devil

39 rule

þerinne was an onlicnesse<sup>1</sup> a<sup>2</sup> wifmonnes liche<sup>3</sup>;  
 Feier hit wes and swiðe heih<sup>4</sup>; an<sup>5</sup> are<sup>6</sup> hæitnesse<sup>7</sup> nome,  
 Diana wes ihaten<sup>8</sup>; þe deovel heo luvade.  
 Heo dude wndercraftes<sup>9</sup>; þe scucke<sup>10</sup> hire fulste.<sup>11</sup>  
 Heo wes quen of alle wodes þe weoxen<sup>12</sup> on eorðen; 5  
 A<sup>13</sup> þon heðene lawen me<sup>14</sup> heold heo for hehne<sup>15</sup> godd.  
 To hire weoren iwoned<sup>16</sup> þa wndercreftie men;  
 Of þa þingen<sup>17</sup> þa weren to kumen heo heom wolde cuðen<sup>18</sup>  
 Mid tacnen<sup>19</sup> and mid swefnen,<sup>20</sup> þonne heo weren on slæpe.  
 • • • þe wile þeo on þan eitlonde wes folc woniende,<sup>21</sup> 10  
 Heo wurðeden<sup>22</sup> þat anlicnes; þe scucke hit<sup>23</sup> onfeng.<sup>24</sup>  
 Brutus hit herde siggen<sup>25</sup> þurh his sæmonnen  
 þe ær<sup>26</sup> weoren on þan londe, and þa lawen wusten.  
 Brutus nam twelf witizen,<sup>27</sup> þe weren his wiseste men,  
 And enne preost of his lawen, þa weren on þan heðen dawen<sup>28</sup> 15  
 (Gerion hehte þe preost; he was an hirede<sup>29</sup> hæh);  
 He ferde<sup>30</sup> to þere stowe<sup>31</sup> þar Diane inne stod.  
 Brutus ferde into þere temple, and þa twelfe mid him,  
 And lette al his folc bilæven<sup>32</sup> þerute.<sup>33</sup>  
 Ana scale<sup>34</sup> he bear an honde, al of reade golde; 20  
 Milc wes i þere scale, and win sume dale<sup>35</sup>;  
 þa milc wæs of are wite hinde, þe Brutus sceat mid his honde.  
 He makede bi þon weofede<sup>36</sup> a swiðe<sup>37</sup> wunsum<sup>38</sup> fur;  
 Nizen siðen<sup>39</sup> he bieode<sup>40</sup> þat weofed, for his neode.<sup>41</sup>  
 He clepede<sup>42</sup> to þere levedi<sup>43</sup> — heo wes him on heorten leof<sup>44</sup>; 25

1 image  
 2 in  
 3 form  
 4 majestic  
 5 by  
 6 a  
 7 heathen religion's (?)  
 8 called  
 9 sorceries  
 10 fiend  
 11 aided  
 12 grew  
 13 by  
 14 one, they  
 15 high

16 accustomed to resort  
 17 MS. kingen  
 18 tell  
 19 signs  
 20 visions  
 21 dwelling  
 22 worshiped  
 23 (the worship?)  
 24 received  
 25 say  
 26 formerly  
 27 prophets  
 28 days  
 29 among the people  
 30 proceeded

31 place  
 32 remain  
 33 outside  
 34 dish  
 35 part  
 36 altar  
 37 most  
 38 winsome  
 39 times  
 40 circled about  
 41 need  
 42 cried  
 43 lady  
 44 dear

- Mid milden his worden he gærnde<sup>1</sup> hire mihten.  
 Ofte he custe<sup>2</sup> þat weofed mid wnsome lates<sup>3</sup> ;  
 He halde<sup>4</sup> þa milc in þat fur mid milden his worden :  
 ' Leafdi Diana, leove Diana, heze Diana, help me to neode.  
 5 Wise<sup>5</sup> mi and witere,<sup>6</sup> þurh þine witful<sup>7</sup> craft,  
 Whuder Ich mæi liðan,<sup>8</sup> and ledan mine leoden  
 To ane wnsome londe, þer<sup>9</sup> ich mihte wunien.<sup>10</sup>  
 And gif Ich þat lond mai biȝeten,<sup>11</sup> and mi folc hit þurhgengen,<sup>12</sup>  
 Makian Ich wille on þine nome mæren<sup>13</sup> ane stowe,  
 10 And Ich þe wulle huren<sup>14</sup> mid wrhscepe hæȝan.<sup>15</sup> ' •  
 þus spec Brutus.  
 Seoððen<sup>16</sup> he nam þe hude<sup>17</sup> þa wæs of þære hinde ;  
 Biforen þan wefede he heo spradde, swlc<sup>18</sup> he leie on bedde ;  
 He cnelede þar ufenan,<sup>19</sup> and seoððen he adun læi ;  
 15 Swa he gon slomnen,<sup>20</sup> and þeræfter to slepen.  
 þa puhte him on his swefne, þar he on slepe læi,  
 þat his lavedi Diana hine leoffiche<sup>21</sup> biheolde  
 Mid wnsome leahrtren<sup>22</sup> ; wel heo him bihihte,<sup>23</sup>  
 And hendiliche<sup>24</sup> hire hond on his heved leide,  
 20 And þus him to seide, þer he on slepe lai :  
 ' Biȝende<sup>25</sup> France, i pet west, þu scalt finden a wunsum lond ;  
 þat lond is biurnan<sup>26</sup> mid þære sæ ; þaron þu scalt wrþan<sup>27</sup> sæl.<sup>28</sup>  
 þar is fugel, þar is fisc ; þer wuniað feire deor ;  
 þar is wode, þar is water ; þar is wilderne<sup>29</sup> muchel.  
 25 þet lond is swipe wunsum ; weallen<sup>30</sup> þer beoð feire ;  
 Wuniað in þon londe eotanes<sup>31</sup> swiðe stronge.  
 Albion hatte þat lond, ah leode ne beoð þar nane.  
 þerto þu scalt teman,<sup>32</sup> and ane neowe Troye þar makian ;

<sup>1</sup> besought<sup>2</sup> kissed<sup>3</sup> looks<sup>4</sup> poured<sup>5</sup> guide<sup>6</sup> instruct<sup>7</sup> MS. wihtful<sup>8</sup> journey<sup>9</sup> where<sup>10</sup> dwell<sup>11</sup> obtain<sup>12</sup> overrun<sup>13</sup> noble<sup>14</sup> adore<sup>15</sup> high<sup>16</sup> afterward<sup>17</sup> hide<sup>18</sup> as if<sup>19</sup> upon<sup>20</sup> drowse<sup>21</sup> lovingly<sup>22</sup> laughter<sup>23</sup> promised<sup>24</sup> courteously<sup>25</sup> beyond<sup>26</sup> surrounded<sup>27</sup> become<sup>28</sup> prosperous<sup>29</sup> wilderness<sup>30</sup> wells, springs<sup>31</sup> giants ; MS. eotantes<sup>32</sup> repair



þer scal of þine cunne<sup>1</sup> kinebearn<sup>2</sup> arisen,  
 And scal þin mære<sup>3</sup> kun wælden<sup>4</sup> þas<sup>5</sup> londes,  
 Ȝeond<sup>6</sup> þa weorlð beon ihæged<sup>7</sup>; and þu beo hæl and isund.<sup>8</sup>

## THE BUILDING OF LONDON

Lines 1985–2060 (Madden 1.84–7). Cf. Geoffrey 1.17. 224 5–10 may be compared with the ultimate original in Geoffrey of Monmouth, with Robert of Gloucester's version of the latter, with Wace's expansion, and with Robert of Brunne's rendering of Wace:

Geoffrey of Monmouth 1.16: 'Amœno tamen situ locorum et piscosorum fluminum copia, nemoribusque præelecta.'

Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle* (ca. 1300) 484–7:

þo Brut and is men þus come verst to londe,  
 Hii wende aboute wide inou, þe contreies vor to fonde;  
 Gret plente hii founde of fiis, as hii wende bi þe weie,  
 Of wodes and of rivers, as is in þe contreie.

Wace, *Brut* 1245–1250:

Brutus esgarda les montaignes,  
 Vit les valées, vit les plaines,  
 Les marines et les boscages,  
 Et les éves et les rivages;  
 Vit les cans et les praaries;  
 Vit les tères bien gaagnies.

Robert (Manning) of Brunne (1338) 1889–1894:

Brutus byhel[d] þe mountaynes,  
 And avised hym o þe playnes;  
 Biheld þe wodes, watres, and ffen,  
 Where esyest wony[n]g were for men;  
 Als watres ronnen wel, he byheld,  
 And mede wiþ þe eryed feld.

Brutaine hefde Brutus, and Cornwaile Corineus.

Brutus nom alle his freond, þe<sup>9</sup> comen in his ferde<sup>10</sup>;

Neh him he heom lænde,<sup>11</sup> for heo him leofe weoren.

Corineus him cleopede to alle his icorene<sup>12</sup>;

Alle he heom lænde þer heom wes alre<sup>13</sup> leofest.

<sup>1</sup> kin

<sup>2</sup> royal progeny

<sup>3</sup> illustrious

<sup>4</sup> rule (w. gen.)

<sup>5</sup> MS. þus

<sup>6</sup> throughout

<sup>7</sup> exalted

<sup>8</sup> sound

<sup>9</sup> that

<sup>10</sup> army

<sup>11</sup> placed

<sup>12</sup> chosen ones

<sup>13</sup> of all

- Weox<sup>1</sup> þet folk and wel ipaih,<sup>2</sup> for ælc hefde his iwillen<sup>3</sup> ;  
 Inne lut<sup>4</sup> zeren firste<sup>5</sup> wes þat folc swa muchel  
 þat þer nas nan ende of folke swiþe hende.  
 Brutus hine biþohte,<sup>6</sup> and þis folc biheold ;  
 5 Biheold he þa munes, feire and muchele ;  
 Biheold he þa medewan þat weoren swiðe mære ;<sup>19</sup>  
 Biheold he þa wateres and þa wilde deor ;  
 Biheold he þa fisches ; biheold he þa fugeles ;  
 Biheold he þa leswa<sup>7</sup> and þene leofliche<sup>8</sup> wode ;  
 10 Biheold he þene wode hu he bleou<sup>9</sup> ; biheold he þat corn hu hit greu ;  
 Al he iseih on leoden þat him leof was on heorten.  
 Þa biþohte he on Troygen,<sup>10</sup> þer his cun teone<sup>11</sup> poleden,<sup>12</sup>  
 And he liðde<sup>13</sup> geond þis lond, and scæwede<sup>14</sup> þa<sup>15</sup> leoden.  
 He funde wunsum ane stude<sup>16</sup> uppen ane watere ;  
 15 þær he gon aræren<sup>17</sup> riche ane burhe,<sup>18</sup>  
 Mid bouren and mid hallen, mid hæge stanwalle[n].  
 Þa þe burh wes imaked, þa wes he swiðe mære.<sup>19</sup>  
 Þa burh wes swiðe wel idon, and he hire sette name on ;  
 He gef hire<sup>20</sup> tirfulne<sup>21</sup> name — Troye þe Newe,  
 20 To munien<sup>22</sup> his ikunde<sup>23</sup> whone<sup>24</sup> he icomen weore.  
 Seoððen<sup>25</sup> þa leodene longe þerafter  
 Leiden adun þene<sup>26</sup> noma, and Trinovant heo<sup>27</sup> nemneden.  
 Binnen<sup>28</sup> feola<sup>29</sup> wintre hit iwerð<sup>30</sup> seoððen<sup>31</sup>  
 þat aræs of Brutus kunne — þat wes an heh king —  
 25 Lud wes ihaten.<sup>32</sup> þas burh he luvede swiðe ;  
 þe king i þere burh wonede swiðe feola wintre.  
 He lette heo Lude clepian gond his leodfolke,  
 Hehte<sup>33</sup> heo nemnen Kaerlud, æfter þone kinge.

1 grew  
 2 thrive  
 3 will (what he desired)  
 4 a few  
 5 time  
 6 bethought  
 7 pastures  
 8 lovely  
 9 blew  
 10 Troy  
 11 evil

12 suffered  
 13 journeyed ; MS. liððe  
 14 viewed  
 15 MS. þea  
 16 spot  
 17 erect  
 18 city  
 19 glorious ; MS. mare  
 20 MS. hire to hire  
 21 glorious  
 22 commemorate

23 lineage  
 24 from which  
 25 subsequently ; MS. soððen  
 26 that  
 27 it  
 28 within  
 29 many  
 30 befell  
 31 MS. seodðen  
 32 named  
 33 commanded

Seoððen<sup>1</sup> com oþer tir<sup>2</sup> and neowe tidinde,  
 þat men heo clepeden Lundin over al þas leode.  
 Seoððen comen Engliſce men, and cleopeden heo Lundene;  
 Seoððen<sup>3</sup> comen þa Frenſca — þa mid fehte<sup>4</sup> heo biwonnen<sup>5</sup> —  
 Mid heora leodðeawe,<sup>6</sup> and Lundres heo hehten.<sup>7</sup>

5

## THE DIVISION OF LEAR'S KINGDOM

Lines 2902-3110 (Madden 1. 123-32). Cf. Geoffrey 2. 11

Bladud hafde enne sune — Leir wes ihaten;  
 Efter his fader<sup>8</sup> daie he heold þis drihliche<sup>9</sup> lond  
 Somed<sup>10</sup> an<sup>11</sup> his live<sup>12</sup> ſixti winter.  
 He makede ane riche burh þurh radfulle<sup>13</sup> his crafte,<sup>14</sup>  
 And he heo lette nemnen efter himseolvan;  
 Kaer Leir hehte þe burh — leof heo wes þan kinge —  
 Þa we an ure leodquide<sup>15</sup> Leircheſtre<sup>16</sup> clepiað.  
 Zeare,<sup>17</sup> a þan olde<sup>18</sup> dawen,<sup>19</sup> heo wes ſwiðe aðel<sup>20</sup> burh;  
 And seoððen þer ſeh<sup>21</sup> toward ſwiðe muchel ſeorwe,  
 Þat heo wes al forfaren<sup>22</sup> þurh þere leodene væl.<sup>23</sup>  
 Sixti winter hefde Leir þis lond al to welden.  
 Þe king hefde þreo dohtren bi his drihliche quen;  
 Nefde he nenne sune — þerfore he warð ſari —  
 His manſcipe<sup>24</sup> to halden, buten<sup>25</sup> þa þreo dohtren.  
 Þa ældeſte dohter haihte Gornouille, þa oðer Ragau, þa þridde  
 Cordouille —  
 Heo wes þa gungeste ſuſter, a<sup>26</sup> wliſen<sup>27</sup> alre vaiſeſt;  
 Heo wes hire fader al ſwa leof ſwa his azene lif.  
 Þa ældede<sup>28</sup> þe king, and wakede<sup>29</sup> an aðelan<sup>30</sup>;

10

15

20

<sup>1</sup> MS. seoððen

<sup>2</sup> glory

<sup>3</sup> MS. ſeoððen

<sup>4</sup> battle

<sup>5</sup> won

<sup>6</sup> national cuſtoms

<sup>7</sup> called (it)

<sup>8</sup> father's

<sup>9</sup> noble

<sup>10</sup> together

<sup>11</sup> in

<sup>12</sup> lifetime

<sup>13</sup> prudent

<sup>14</sup> ſkill

<sup>15</sup> language

<sup>16</sup> Leiceſter

<sup>17</sup> formerly

<sup>18</sup> MS. holde

<sup>19</sup> days

<sup>20</sup> noble

<sup>21</sup> came

<sup>22</sup> deſtroyed

<sup>23</sup> ſlaughter

<sup>24</sup> dignity, lordſhip

<sup>25</sup> only

<sup>26</sup> in

<sup>27</sup> beauty

<sup>28</sup> grew old

<sup>29</sup> became weak

<sup>30</sup> power

- And he hine biþohte wet he don mahte  
 Of <sup>1</sup> his kineriche <sup>2</sup> æfter his deie.  
 He seide to himselven þat þat uvel <sup>8</sup> wes :  
 ' Ic wlle mine riche todon <sup>4</sup> allen <sup>5</sup> minen dohtren,  
 5 And ȝeven hem mine kineþeode, <sup>6</sup> and twemen <sup>7</sup> mine[n] bearnen, <sup>8</sup>  
 Ac ærst Ic wille fondien <sup>9</sup> whulche <sup>10</sup> beo mi beste freond,  
 And heo scal habbe þat beste del of mine drihlichen lon[d].'  
 Þus þe king þohte, and þeræfter he worhte.  
 He clepede Gornaille, his <sup>11</sup> godfulle <sup>12</sup> dohter,  
 10 Ut of hire bure to hire fader deore ;  
 And þus <sup>13</sup> spac þe alde king, þer he on æðelen <sup>14</sup> seat :  
 ' Sei me, Gornaille, soðere <sup>15</sup> worden :  
 Swiðe dure <sup>16</sup> þeo eart me ; hu leof æm Ich þe ?  
 Hu mochel worþ <sup>17</sup> levest <sup>18</sup> þu me to walden kineriche ?'  
 15 Gornaille was swiðe wær <sup>19</sup> — swa beoð wifmen wel ihwær <sup>20</sup> —  
 And seide ane lesinge heore <sup>21</sup> fædere þon king :  
 ' Leofe fæder dure, swa bide <sup>22</sup> Ich Godes are <sup>23</sup> —  
 Swa helpe me Apollin, for min ilæfe <sup>24</sup> is al on him —  
 Þat levere <sup>25</sup> þeo <sup>26</sup> ært me æne <sup>27</sup> þane þis world al clane <sup>28</sup> ;  
 20 And ȝet <sup>29</sup> Ic þe wlle speken wit <sup>30</sup> : þeou ært leovere þene mi lif ;  
 And þis Ich sugðe <sup>31</sup> þe to soðe <sup>32</sup> ; þu miht <sup>33</sup> me wel ileve. <sup>34</sup> '  
 Leir þe king ilefde his dohter <sup>35</sup> læisinge,  
 And þas ænsware ȝef — þat wæs þe olde king :  
 ' Ich þe, Gornaille, sugðe, <sup>36</sup> leove dohter dure,  
 25 God <sup>37</sup> scal beon þi mēda <sup>38</sup> for þira gretinge.  
 Ic eam, for mire ældde, <sup>39</sup> sw[i]þe unbalded, <sup>40</sup>

1 with  
 2 kingdom  
 3 evil  
 4 divide  
 5 MS. & allen  
 6 kingdom  
 7 apportion  
 8 children  
 9 test  
 10 MS. whulchere  
 11 MS. hes  
 12 goodly ; MS. guð-  
 13 MS. þeus  
 14 state

15 with true  
 16 dear  
 17 MS. worȝ  
 18 (?) ; MS. leste  
 19 wary, cunning  
 20 everywhere  
 21 to her  
 22 hope for  
 23 mercy  
 24 belief  
 25 dearer  
 26 thou  
 27 alone  
 28 entire

29 yet more  
 30 with  
 31 say  
 32 MS. seoðe  
 33 mayst ; MS. mith  
 34 believe  
 35 daughter's ; MS. dostet  
 36 say ; MS. seuge  
 37 good  
 38 reward  
 39 old age  
 40 enfeebled

And þou me lovest<sup>1</sup> sw[i]þe mare þan is on live.  
 Ich wille mi drihliche<sup>2</sup> lond a þreo<sup>3</sup> al toдалen<sup>4</sup>;  
 Þin is þat beste deal; þu ært mi dohter deore,  
 And scalt habben to laverd min alre beste þein<sup>5</sup>  
 þeo Ich mai vinden in mine kinnelonde.<sup>6</sup> 5  
 Æfter spac þe olde kinge wit his [oþer]<sup>7</sup> dohter:  
 'Leove dohter Regau, wæt seist tu<sup>8</sup> me to ræide<sup>9</sup>?  
 Seie þu bifore mire dugden<sup>10</sup> heo<sup>11</sup> dure Ich am þe an herten.'  
 Þa answærde [Regau] mid rætfulle<sup>12</sup> worden:  
 'Al þat is on live nis nig<sup>13</sup> swa dure 10  
 Swa me is þin an lime,<sup>14</sup> forðe<sup>15</sup> min ahzene<sup>16</sup> lif.'  
 Ah heo ne seide naþing soð,<sup>17</sup> no more þenne hire suste[r];  
 Alle hire lesinge hire vader ilefede.  
 Þa answarede þe king — his<sup>18</sup> doxter him icwemde<sup>19</sup>:  
 'Þea pridde del of mine londe Ich bitake<sup>20</sup> þe an honde; 15  
 Þu scalt nime<sup>21</sup> loved<sup>22</sup> þer þe is alre leowost.'  
 Þa zet nolde<sup>23</sup> þe leodking<sup>24</sup> his sotscipe<sup>25</sup> bilæven<sup>26</sup>;  
 He hehte<sup>27</sup> cumen him biforen his dohter Cordoille.  
 Heo was alre zungest, of soðe zærwitelest,<sup>28</sup>  
 And þe king heo lovede more þanne ba tueie<sup>29</sup> þe oðre. 20  
 Cordoille iherde þa lasinge þe hire sustren seiden þon kinge;  
 Nom<sup>30</sup> hire leaffulne<sup>31</sup> huie<sup>32</sup> þat heo lizen<sup>33</sup> nolden —  
 Hire fader heo wolde sugē soð,<sup>34</sup> were him lef,<sup>35</sup> were him lað.<sup>36</sup>  
 þeo queð þe alde king — unræd<sup>37</sup> him fulede<sup>38</sup>:  
 'Iheren Ich wille of þe, Cordoille — 25  
 Swa þe helpe Appolin — hu deore þe beo lif min.'  
 Þa answarede Cordoille, lude<sup>39</sup> and no wiht stille,

1 MS. levoste  
 2 MS. dirh-  
 3 in three; MS. þreo  
 4 divide  
 5 thane  
 6 realm  
 7 second  
 8 thou  
 9 as opinion  
 10 men; MS. dugden  
 11 how  
 12 prudent  
 13 nigh

14 limb  
 15 before (?)  
 16 own  
 17 true; MS. seð  
 18 MS. hiis  
 19 pleased  
 20 deliver  
 21 take  
 22 husband  
 23 would not  
 24 king  
 25 folly; MS. soth-  
 26 abandon

27 commanded  
 28 most gifted  
 29 both (both two)  
 30 made up  
 31 faithful  
 32 mind (OE. *hyge*)  
 33 lie  
 34 MS. seoð  
 35 agreeable  
 36 disagreeable  
 37 un wisdom; MS. unrað  
 38 followed  
 39 loudly

- Mid gomene<sup>1</sup> and mid lehtre to hire fader leve :  
 ' þeo art me leof al so<sup>2</sup> mi fæder, and Ich þe al so þi dohter ;  
 Ich habbe to þe soþfaste<sup>3</sup> love, for<sup>4</sup> we buoð swiþe isibbe<sup>5</sup> ;  
 And — swa Ich ibide<sup>6</sup> are — Ich wille þe suge mare :  
 5 Al swa muchel þu bist worþ<sup>7</sup> swa þu weldende<sup>8</sup> ært,  
 And al swa muchel swa þu havest men þe wleþ<sup>9</sup> luvien,  
 For sone he<sup>10</sup> bið ilaged,<sup>11</sup> þe mon þe lutel ah.<sup>12</sup>  
 þus seide þe mæiden Cordoille, and seoððen set sw[i]þe stille.  
 þa iwarðe<sup>13</sup> þe king wræð<sup>14</sup> for he nes noht<sup>15</sup> iquemed,<sup>16</sup>  
 10 And wende on [h]is þonke<sup>17</sup> þat<sup>18</sup> hit weren for unðeawe<sup>19</sup>  
 þat he hire weore swa unwourð þat heo hine nolde iwurði<sup>20</sup>  
 Swa hire twa sustren, þe ba somed<sup>21</sup> læsinge speken.  
 þe king Leir iwerðe<sup>22</sup> swa blac swlch<sup>23</sup> hit a blac cloð weoren,  
 Iwærð his hude<sup>24</sup> and his heowe,<sup>25</sup> for he was suþe<sup>26</sup> ihærmed<sup>27</sup> ;  
 15 Mid þære wræððe he wes isweved,<sup>28</sup> þat<sup>29</sup> he feol iswowen.<sup>30</sup>  
 Late<sup>31</sup> þeo he up fusde<sup>32</sup> — þat mæiden wes afeared ;  
 þa hit alles up brac — hit wes uvel<sup>33</sup> þat he spac :  
 ' Hær[c]ne,<sup>34</sup> Cordoille, Ich þe telle wlle<sup>35</sup> mine wille :  
 Of mine dohtren þu were me duresst ; nu þu æart me alre<sup>36</sup> læðes[t].<sup>37</sup>  
 20 Ne scalt þu næver halden dale of mine lande,  
 Ah mine[n] dohtren Ich wlle delen mine riche,<sup>38</sup>  
 And þu scalt worðen wræchen,<sup>39</sup> and wonien in wansiðe,<sup>40</sup>  
 For navere Ich ne wende<sup>41</sup> þat þu me woldes þus scanden<sup>42</sup> ;  
 þarfore þu scalt beon dæd,<sup>43</sup> Ich wene ; fliȝ<sup>44</sup> ut of min eæhsene.<sup>45</sup>  
 25 þine sustren sculen habben mi kinelond ; and þis me is iqueme.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>1</sup> mirth (game)<sup>2</sup> as<sup>3</sup> true ; MS. soh-<sup>4</sup> because<sup>5</sup> related<sup>6</sup> expect<sup>7</sup> worth<sup>8</sup> ruling ; MS. velden<sup>9</sup> MS. wleþ<sup>10</sup> MS. heo<sup>11</sup> brought low ; MS. ilaged<sup>12</sup> possesses<sup>13</sup> became<sup>14</sup> wroth ; MS. wærð<sup>15</sup> MS. þeo noht<sup>16</sup> gratified<sup>17</sup> thought<sup>18</sup> MS. þaht<sup>19</sup> undutifulness<sup>20</sup> honor<sup>21</sup> both together<sup>22</sup> grew<sup>23</sup> as if<sup>24</sup> skin<sup>25</sup> hue<sup>26</sup> much<sup>27</sup> grieved<sup>28</sup> stupefied<sup>29</sup> so that<sup>30</sup> in a swoon<sup>31</sup> after a time<sup>32</sup> started<sup>33</sup> evil<sup>34</sup> hearken<sup>35</sup> will<sup>36</sup> of all ; MS. arle<sup>37</sup> most hateful<sup>38</sup> realm<sup>39</sup> exile ; MS. warchen<sup>40</sup> misery<sup>41</sup> supposed<sup>42</sup> shame<sup>43</sup> dead<sup>44</sup> fly<sup>45</sup> sight<sup>46</sup> agreeable

þe Duc of Cornwaile scal habbe Gornoille,  
 And þe Scottene king Regau þat scone,<sup>1</sup>  
 And Ic hem geve al þa winne<sup>2</sup> þe Ich æm waldinge<sup>3</sup> over.<sup>4</sup>  
 And al þe alde king dude<sup>5</sup> swa he hafvede<sup>6</sup> idemed.<sup>6</sup>  
 Of[t] wes þen<sup>7</sup> mædene wa,<sup>8</sup> and nævre wors þenne þa<sup>9</sup> ; 5  
 Wa<sup>10</sup> hire wes on mode<sup>11</sup> for hire fader wræpe.<sup>12</sup>  
 Heo wende<sup>13</sup> into hire boure, þar heo ofte sætte sare,<sup>14</sup>  
 For heo nolde ligen hire<sup>15</sup> fader<sup>16</sup> leove.

## CÆSAR'S BATTLE WITH THE BRITONS

Lines 7472-7662 (Madden 1. 319-27). Cf. Geoffrey 4. 3, 4

He<sup>17</sup> cleopede on his cnihtes : ' Ȝarewieð<sup>18</sup> eow to fihte,  
 For nu is mid ferde<sup>19</sup> icumen Cassibellaunus.' 10  
 Heo liðede<sup>20</sup> togadere mid heore speren longe,  
 Mid axen, mid sweorden, mid scærpe speres orde<sup>21</sup> ;  
 Hardliche<sup>22</sup> heo heowen<sup>23</sup> ; hælmes þer gollen<sup>24</sup> ;  
 Feon[d]liche<sup>25</sup> heo feohten ; hafdes<sup>26</sup> þer feollen.  
 And Cesar þe keisere wes unimete<sup>27</sup> kene<sup>28</sup> : 15  
 His longe sword he adroh,<sup>29</sup> and moni mon þermide<sup>30</sup> asloh<sup>31</sup> ;  
 He swonc<sup>32</sup> i þon fehte þat al he lavede<sup>33</sup> a sweote.<sup>34</sup>  
 He sloh þa<sup>35</sup> him neh<sup>36</sup> weoren — alle buten<sup>37</sup> iferen<sup>38</sup> ;  
 He dude þer muchelne<sup>39</sup> wundre ; he sloh þer an hundred  
 Of ahtere<sup>40</sup> monnen, þe feond<sup>41</sup> mid his mæche.<sup>42</sup> 20  
 þat iseh Androgeus, and cleopede his fader Nennius,

1 fair  
 2 possessions (?)  
 3 ruler  
 4 did,  
 5 had  
 6 decided  
 7 to the  
 8 woe  
 9 then  
 10 MS. þa  
 11 heart  
 12 wrath ; MS. wærpe  
 13 MS. vende  
 14 sorrowful

15 to her  
 16 MS. fadder  
 17 Cæsar  
 18 prepare  
 19 army  
 20 came  
 21 point  
 22 stoutly  
 23 hewed  
 24 resounded  
 25 fiercely  
 26 heads  
 27 beyond measure  
 28 brave

29 drew  
 30 therewith  
 31 MS. asloð  
 32 labored  
 33 dripped  
 34 sweat  
 35 those that  
 36 near  
 37 without  
 38 companions (help)  
 39 a great  
 40 valiant  
 41 enemy  
 42 sword

- And beiene<sup>1</sup> þa eorles bugen<sup>2</sup> heom togaderes,  
 Mid swiðe muchele folke; togæderen stoden faste.  
 Isegen<sup>3</sup> heo Julius Cesar fæhten al swa a wilde bar,  
 And heo him to fusden<sup>4</sup> mid ladliche<sup>5</sup> fehte,  
 5 And monie of heore feonden heo fælden to þon grunde.  
 Ða iseh Nennius wær<sup>6</sup> fæht Cesar Julius,  
 And he him to rasde<sup>7</sup> mid ræhæm<sup>8</sup> his sweorde;  
 Uppen þene helm he hine smat þat þet sweord in bat.  
 Selkuð<sup>9</sup> hit þuhte<sup>10</sup> moni cnihte  
 10 Þat he durste cumen him næh, for þan þa þe keisere<sup>11</sup> wes swa hæh.<sup>12</sup>  
 Julius Cesar ne queð nan word, ah he bræid<sup>13</sup> ut his sweord,  
 And Nennium he smat þa uppen þene helm swa  
 Þat þe helm tohælde,<sup>14</sup> and þat hæfde<sup>15</sup> bledde;  
 Ah he ne blakede<sup>16</sup> no, for he wes cniht wel idon.<sup>17</sup>  
 15 And Julius noht ne na bræð,<sup>18</sup> ah his brond<sup>19</sup> he up ahæf,<sup>20</sup>  
 And Nennius hæf up his sceld, scilde<sup>21</sup> hine sulte.  
 Julius adun smat,<sup>22</sup> and þat sweord a<sup>23</sup> ðene scelde bat<sup>24</sup>;  
 Julius hit wraste,<sup>25</sup> and þat sweord stike[de]<sup>26</sup> feste;  
 Julius þat sweord heold, and Nennius þene sceld,  
 20 And þus heo hit longe bituzen,<sup>27</sup> ne mihte he þat sweord ut dragen.<sup>28</sup>  
 Ðat isæh Androgeus hu verden<sup>29</sup> Cesar and Nennius,  
 And he<sup>30</sup> hem to fusde, Nennius<sup>31</sup> to fulste.<sup>32</sup>  
 Ða isæh Cesar tiðend<sup>33</sup> þat him wes sær;  
 He forlette<sup>34</sup> þene brand — þa nefde he noht on his hond —  
 25 And he þa feondliche<sup>35</sup> turnde to flæme.<sup>36</sup>  
 Nennius wende i þane felde, and he turnde his scelde,  
 Droh ut þene brande. Ða wes þe eorl swiþe bald:

<sup>1</sup> both<sup>2</sup> turned<sup>3</sup> saw<sup>4</sup> hurried<sup>5</sup> hostile<sup>6</sup> where<sup>7</sup> rushed<sup>8</sup> fierce<sup>9</sup> strange<sup>10</sup> MS. þuðte<sup>11</sup> emperor<sup>12</sup> awe-inspiring<sup>13</sup> drew<sup>14</sup> gave way<sup>15</sup> head<sup>16</sup> paled<sup>17</sup> trained<sup>18</sup> paused for breath (?); but the text is probably corrupt. (The later MS. has: mid þe seolve bræþ.)<sup>19</sup> sword<sup>20</sup> lifted<sup>21</sup> shielded<sup>22</sup> smote<sup>23</sup> in<sup>24</sup> bit<sup>25</sup> wrenched<sup>26</sup> stuck<sup>27</sup> tugged at<sup>28</sup> draw<sup>29</sup> fared<sup>30</sup> MS. heo<sup>31</sup> MS. monie<sup>32</sup> assistance<sup>33</sup> occurrence<sup>34</sup> let go<sup>35</sup> as a foeman<sup>36</sup> flight



Monie Romanisce men mid þon sweorde he leide adun ;  
 He wes moni<sup>1</sup> monnes bone,<sup>2</sup> and moni anne<sup>3</sup> he dude scome.  
 Al þat he mid þan sweorde smat, þerriht<sup>4</sup> hit<sup>5</sup> iwat<sup>6</sup> ;  
 Al þat he þerimid<sup>7</sup> atran,<sup>8</sup> weore hit flæs,<sup>9</sup> weore hit ban,  
 Þurh þeos sweordes wunde heo fullen to þon grunde. 5  
 Alle dæi wes þat fiht,<sup>10</sup> a<sup>11</sup> þet com þe þestere<sup>12</sup> niht.  
 Julius þe kaisere mid alle þan Romanisce here  
 Dalden<sup>13</sup> from þan fihte al bi þustere nihte ;  
 To hærberge<sup>14</sup> heo wenden uppen þare sæ stronde ;  
 Heo bilefden<sup>15</sup> biæften<sup>16</sup> twenti hundred cnihten 10  
 þeo leien under scelden, islægen geond þon felden.  
 Cesar iwende to his bedde ; his men weoren ofdredde.<sup>17</sup>  
 Hine<sup>18</sup> biwakeden<sup>19</sup> in þere nihte þritti hundred cnihten,  
 Mid helmen and mid burnen,<sup>20</sup> and mid stelene sweorden.  
 Julius Cesar he wes gep<sup>21</sup> and swuðe iwær<sup>22</sup> ; 15  
 He isæh his muchele lure,<sup>23</sup> and of mare<sup>24</sup> he hæfde kare ;  
 He aras to þan midnihte, and bannede<sup>25</sup> his cnihtes,  
 And seide heom þat heo wolden faren and fleon of þissen londe,  
 Faren into Flandre, and beo[n] þer wuniende  
 A<sup>26</sup> þat he isege<sup>27</sup> his time þat heo<sup>28</sup> mihten æft cumen liðen.<sup>29</sup> 20  
 Heo ferden forþ<sup>30</sup> rihte to scipe al bi nihte ;  
 Heo hæfden swiðe fair weder, and wenden into Flandre.  
 A margen, þa hit dæi wes, þe king mid his dugeðe<sup>31</sup>  
 Ȝarekede<sup>32</sup> his ferde, and wende to þan fihte.  
 Þo<sup>33</sup> was Romanisce folc ivaren<sup>34</sup> from here londe,<sup>35</sup> 25  
 þat<sup>36</sup> ne funden heo nāver enne<sup>37</sup> of Cesares monnen.

<sup>1</sup> MS. moniennes<sup>2</sup> slayer<sup>3</sup> a one<sup>4</sup> straightway<sup>5</sup> it (= they)<sup>6</sup> died<sup>7</sup> therewith<sup>8</sup> reached, touched<sup>9</sup> flesh<sup>10</sup> MS. fehti<sup>11</sup> till<sup>12</sup> dark<sup>13</sup> departed<sup>14</sup> shelter, harborage<sup>15</sup> left<sup>16</sup> behind<sup>17</sup> dismayed<sup>18</sup> him ; MS. inne<sup>19</sup> wakened<sup>20</sup> cuirasses<sup>21</sup> astute<sup>22</sup> wary<sup>23</sup> loss<sup>24</sup> more, further ; MS. mære<sup>25</sup> summoned<sup>26</sup> until<sup>27</sup> should see ; MS. iseġen<sup>28</sup> MS. he<sup>29</sup> sailing<sup>30</sup> MS. forh<sup>31</sup> knighthood<sup>32</sup> made ready<sup>33</sup> MS. þeo<sup>34</sup> passed<sup>35</sup> MS. sonde<sup>36</sup> so that<sup>37</sup> one

- þa weoren Bruttes bliðe <sup>1</sup> an heore mode ;  
 Muchel wes þa blisse þat heo makeden mid iwisse, <sup>2</sup>  
 And <sup>3</sup> sone þeræfter særi heo wurden. <sup>4</sup>  
 And Cassibellaune þe king iwarð særi þurh alle þing, <sup>5</sup>  
 5 For Nennius his broðer ne mihte finden bote <sup>6</sup>  
 Of his hæfved-wunde þe Julius smat mid honde,  
 Ne þurh nenne læchecræfte <sup>7</sup> ne mihte he lif habben.  
 Nes þer nan oðer ræd <sup>8</sup> buten Nennius iwarð dæd, <sup>9</sup>  
 And Nennius was ilæid <sup>10</sup> at þon norðgæte i Lundene.  
 10 þe king næm enne marmestan, and lette hine mid golde bigon, <sup>11</sup>  
 Mid golde and mid gimme <sup>12</sup>; his broðer he leide þerinne ;  
 Mid richedome <sup>13</sup> þa Bruttes Nennium biburden. <sup>14</sup>  
 Nu þu miht <sup>15</sup> iheren selkuð <sup>16</sup> word : þe king nom þat ilke <sup>17</sup> sweorde  
 þat Nennius his broðer biwan of Julius Cesare,  
 15 And læide hit bi his broðer, þah <sup>18</sup> hit his bone <sup>19</sup> weore.  
 Wæs þe stelene brond swiðe brad and swiðe long ;  
 þeron weoren igraven feole cunne <sup>20</sup> bocstaven <sup>21</sup> ;  
 A <sup>22</sup> ðere hilde wes igraven  
 þat þa sword wes icleoped <sup>23</sup> inne Rome *Crocia Mors* <sup>24</sup> —  
 20 Swa þat sword hæhte, for hit havede muchele mahte. <sup>25</sup>  
 þermide þe keisere þrætede <sup>26</sup> ælches londes here <sup>27</sup> ;  
 For nas nævere þe ilke bern <sup>28</sup> þe avere iboren weore,  
 þat of þen ilke sweorde enne <sup>29</sup> swipe <sup>30</sup> hefde,  
 þat <sup>31</sup> he of his likame <sup>32</sup> lette ænne drope blod,  
 25 þat he nes sone dæd, neore he noht <sup>33</sup> swa dohti.  
 Julius mid his ferde læi inne Flandre ;   •  
 þa word com to France hou <sup>34</sup> he ivaren hæfde,

1 joyful  
2 with certainty, in truth

3 but

4 MS. wurðen

5 in every way

6 cure

7 medical skill

8 remedy

9 MS. dæð

10 laid

11 adorn

12 precious stone(s)

13 splendor

14 buried

15 mayst

16 strange

17 very

18 though ; MS. þat

19 slayer

20 kinds

21 letters (cf. Ger. *Buchstaben*)

22 on ; MS. æ

23 called

24 Saffron Death

25 might

26 menaced

27 army

28 man

29 a

30 blow

31 so that

32 body

33 never

34 MS. heou

And hu he wæs mid his færde iflæmde <sup>1</sup> of þissen earde.<sup>2</sup>  
 þa <sup>3</sup> weoren þa Frensce men þerfore swiþe vaine,<sup>4</sup>  
 For toward Julius heo hæfden grome,<sup>5</sup> and forþi weoren fæin  
 of his scome.<sup>6</sup>

## CYMBELINE AND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Lines 9064–9185 (Madden 1. 386–91). Cf. Geoffrey 4. 11

On Kinbelines dæie, þe king wes inne Bruttene,  
 Com a þissen middelærde <sup>7</sup> anes maidenenes Sune ; 5  
 Iboren wes in Beðleem of bezste <sup>8</sup> alre burden.<sup>9</sup>  
 He is ihaten Jesu Crist þurh þene Halie Gost,  
 Alre worulde Wunne,<sup>10</sup> Walden[d] <sup>11</sup> englenne.<sup>12</sup>  
 Fæder he is on hevenen, Frovre <sup>13</sup> moncunnes <sup>14</sup> ;  
 Sune he is on eorðen of sele <sup>15</sup> þon mæidene ; 10  
 And þene Halie Gost haldeð <sup>16</sup> mid himseolven.  
 Þene Gast he wel daleð <sup>17</sup> to þan þe him beoð leove,  
 Al swa he dude Peture, þe wes a wræche <sup>18</sup> fiscære,  
 Þe makede hine an mancunne heht <sup>19</sup> of alre manne.  
 Kinbelin, Bruttene king, wes god mon þurh alle þing ; 15  
 And he luvede <sup>20</sup> here twa and twenti gere.  
 An his dæie her luvede a mon inne pisse leoden —  
 Feorliche <sup>21</sup> þing fuleden <sup>22</sup> him — he wes ihaten Teilesin <sup>23</sup> ;  
 Heo heolden <sup>24</sup> hine for witie <sup>25</sup> þurh his witfulne <sup>26</sup> cræfte,  
 And al heo hit ilæfden <sup>27</sup> þat Teilesin heom seide. 20  
 He seide heom seolkuð <sup>28</sup> inoh, and al heo hit funden soð ;  
 He seide heom ælche gere wæt heom to cumen weore.  
 Þe king him sende æfter wise twalf cnihtes,  
 Bad <sup>29</sup> hine comen him <sup>30</sup> to — þat he nan oðer <sup>31</sup> scolde <sup>32</sup> don ;

<sup>1</sup> put to flight

<sup>2</sup> country

<sup>3</sup> MS. þat

<sup>4</sup> fain, glad

<sup>5</sup> grudge

<sup>6</sup> shame

<sup>7</sup> world

<sup>8</sup> the best

<sup>9</sup> women

<sup>10</sup> joy

<sup>11</sup> lord

<sup>12</sup> of angels

<sup>13</sup> comfort

<sup>14</sup> of mankind

<sup>15</sup> blissful

<sup>16</sup> he holdeth

<sup>17</sup> imparts

<sup>18</sup> forlorn

<sup>19</sup> highest

<sup>20</sup> lived

<sup>21</sup> wondrous

<sup>22</sup> followed

<sup>23</sup> Taliesin

<sup>24</sup> held ; MS. heolten

<sup>25</sup> prophet

<sup>26</sup> wise

<sup>27</sup> believed

<sup>28</sup> marvel

<sup>29</sup> bade ; MS. bað

<sup>30</sup> Cymbeline

<sup>31</sup> other thing

<sup>32</sup> should ; MS. seolden

And heo hine bro[h]ten sone biforen þen folkekinge.

Anan swa <sup>1</sup> þe king hine imette, fæire he hine igrette :

' Swa me helpen min hefde and mi chin, wulcume ært þu, Teilesin,

And leovere me is þine isunden <sup>2</sup> þenne a þusend punden.'

5 þa andswerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin :

' Swa ich mote gode iþeon, <sup>3</sup> al <sup>4</sup> þu hit <sup>5</sup> sælt <sup>6</sup> wel biteon. <sup>7</sup>'

þa wes glad Kinbelin, and þus seide to Teilesin :

' Her beoð to þisse londe icumen seolcuðe leodronen, <sup>8</sup>

And fromward <sup>9</sup> þeon <sup>10</sup> londe of Jerusalem ; iwurden <sup>11</sup> heo beoð in  
Beðleem.

10 þer is iboren an luttel child inne þere leoden. <sup>12</sup>

Muchele is and stor <sup>13</sup> þe eige <sup>14</sup> ; tacnen <sup>15</sup> þer beoð on sterren,

An monen, and on seonnen <sup>16</sup> ; eie <sup>17</sup> is on moncunnen.

þis is widen <sup>18</sup> icuð <sup>19</sup> and þa writen <sup>20</sup> me beoð to icume,

And Ic wolde iwiten æt <sup>21</sup> þe — þu ært mi wine <sup>22</sup> deore —

15 To whan <sup>23</sup> þis tocne wule ten, <sup>24</sup> to wulche þinge temen, <sup>25</sup>

For herfore <sup>26</sup> is alches londes folc lædliche <sup>27</sup> afered.'

þa answered Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin :

' Hit wes ȝare <sup>28</sup> iqueðen <sup>29</sup> — þa quides <sup>30</sup> beoð nu soðe —

þat scolden beon a child iboren, of alle folke icoren, <sup>31</sup>

20 And þat scolde beon ihaten Hælend, <sup>32</sup> and helpen his freondes,

Alesen <sup>33</sup> his leofve wines of læðe <sup>34</sup> heore bendes, <sup>35</sup>

Of <sup>36</sup> helle bringen Adam, Noe, and Abraham,

Sadoc and Samiel, and Symeon þene alde,

Josep an[d] Benjamin, and alle his broðeres mid him,

25 Johel and Eliseon, Asor and Naason,

Ysaac and his broðer, and moni enne <sup>37</sup> oðer,

<sup>1</sup> the moment that

<sup>2</sup> health, welfare

<sup>3</sup> well thrive

<sup>4</sup> everything

<sup>5</sup> refers to *al*

<sup>6</sup> shalt

<sup>7</sup> accomplish

<sup>8</sup> secret tidings

<sup>9</sup> from ; MS. -warð

<sup>10</sup> the

<sup>11</sup> come to pass ; MS. iwurðen

<sup>12</sup> country

<sup>13</sup> mighty, overwhelming

<sup>14</sup> alarm, misgiving

<sup>15</sup> signs

<sup>16</sup> sun

<sup>17</sup> fear

<sup>18</sup> widely

<sup>19</sup> known

<sup>20</sup> writings

<sup>21</sup> know from

<sup>22</sup> friend

<sup>23</sup> which

<sup>24</sup> tend

<sup>25</sup> lead

<sup>26</sup> on account of this

<sup>27</sup> sore

<sup>28</sup> long ago

<sup>29</sup> announced

<sup>30</sup> assertions

<sup>31</sup> choicest

<sup>32</sup> Saviour, Jesus

<sup>33</sup> deliver

<sup>34</sup> hateful

<sup>35</sup> bonds

<sup>36</sup> from

<sup>37</sup> a one

Moni hundred þusend þe iþud<sup>1</sup> beoð to hellen ;  
 And for swulchere<sup>2</sup> neode he is icumen to þere þeoden.<sup>3</sup>  
 Þeos word seide Teilesin, and alle heo weoren soðe.  
 Þa þan<sup>4</sup> kinge weoren<sup>5</sup> icudde þas quides þa weoren soðe,  
 þa weoren þa tiðinde cuðe ȝeond his kineriche ;  
 Bruttes herof ȝemden,<sup>6</sup> and noht hit ne forȝeten.

5

Kinbelin wes god king, and griðful<sup>7</sup> þurh alle þing,<sup>8</sup>  
 And þa Romleoden<sup>9</sup> swiðe hine luveden ;  
 And ȝif þe king wolde<sup>10</sup> wið<sup>11</sup> heom wiðerhalden,<sup>12</sup>  
 He mihte<sup>13</sup> æthalden<sup>14</sup> heore feoh<sup>15</sup> þe Julius her<sup>16</sup> fætte<sup>17</sup> ;  
 Ah ævere mare<sup>18</sup> bi<sup>19</sup> his live he hit heom leofliche<sup>20</sup> ȝeaf.  
 Seoððe<sup>21</sup> him comen þæ tiðinde of Crist, Godes childe,  
 Ne leovede<sup>22</sup> þe king mare buten ten ȝere :  
 Seoððen þe king bilæfden<sup>23</sup> his lif ; inne Eowverwike<sup>24</sup> he ȝet lið.<sup>25</sup>

10

### THE OLD ENGLISH CHRONICLE: THE REIGN OF STEPHEN (A.D. 1137)

The *Old English Chronicle* is of priceless value for the early history of England. Toward the end the language passes over into an early form of Middle English. Modern historians have often drawn upon this passage in characterizing the reign of Stephen.

Our text is from *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. Plummer and Earle, pp. 263-5, with contractions expanded.

Þa-þe<sup>26</sup> King Stephne to Englalande com, þa macod he his gader-  
 ing<sup>27</sup> æt Oxeneford, and þar he nam þe biscop Roger of Sereberi,<sup>28</sup>  
 and Alexander, Biscop of Lincol, and te Canceler Roger, hise neves,<sup>29</sup>  
 and dide ælle in prisun til hi iafen<sup>30</sup> up here castles. Þa the suikes<sup>31</sup>

15

1 consigned

2 such

3 peoples

4 to the

5 MS. wes

6 took note

7 peaceable

8 in all ways

9 Romans

10 had wished

11 against

12 rebel ; MS. -heolden

13 might have ; MS. miðte

14 withhold

15 tribute

16 from here

17 fetched

18 MS. mære

19 during

20 submissively, loyally

21 after

22 lived

23 departed

24 York

25 lies

26 when

27 assembly

28 Salisbury

29 nephews

30 gave

31 traitors

undergæton<sup>1</sup> ðat he milde man was and softe and god, and na justise ne dide, þa diden hi alle wunder. Hi hadden him manred<sup>2</sup> maked and athes suoren, ac<sup>3</sup> hi nan treuthe ne heolden; alle hi<sup>4</sup> wæron forsworen and here treotthes forloren, for ævric<sup>5</sup> rice man his castles makede and agænes him heolden, and fylden þe land ful of castles. Hi swuncen<sup>6</sup> suyðe þe wrecce men of þe land mid castelweorces.<sup>7</sup> Þa þe castles waren maked, þa fylden hi [hi] mid deovles and yvele men. Þa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat ani god<sup>8</sup> hefden, bathe be nihtes and be dæies, carlmen<sup>9</sup> and wimmen, and diden heom in prisun, 10 efter<sup>10</sup> gold and sylver, and pined<sup>11</sup> heom untellendlice<sup>12</sup> pining. For ne wæren nævre nan martyrs swa pined also hi wæron; me<sup>13</sup> hanged up bi the fet and smoked heom mid ful<sup>14</sup> smoke; me hanged bi the þumbes other bi the hefed,<sup>15</sup> and hengen bryniges<sup>16</sup> on her fet; me dide cnotted strenges abuton here hæved, and wrythen<sup>17</sup> to ðat it 15 gæde<sup>18</sup> to þe hæernes.<sup>19</sup> Hi dyden heom in quarterne,<sup>20</sup> þar nadres<sup>21</sup> and snakes and pades<sup>22</sup> wæron inne, and drapen<sup>23</sup> heom swa. Sume hi diden in crucethus,<sup>24</sup> ðat is in an cæste<sup>25</sup> þat was scort and nareu and undep, and dide scærpe stanes þerinne, and þrengde<sup>26</sup> þe man þærinne ðat him bræcon alle þe limes. In mani of þe castles wæron 20 lof<sup>27</sup> and grin,<sup>28</sup> ðat wæron rachenteges<sup>29</sup> ðat twa ofer thre men hadden onoh to bæron onne<sup>30</sup>; þat was sua maced, ðat is fæstned to an beom,<sup>31</sup> and diden an scærp iren abuton þe<sup>32</sup> mannes throte and his hals,<sup>33</sup> ðat he ne myhte nowiderwardes,<sup>34</sup> ne sitten ne lien ne slepen, oc bæron al ðat iren. Mani þusen[d] hi drapen mid hungær.

25 I ne can ne I ne mai tellen alle þe wunder, ne alle þe pines, ðat hi diden wrecce men on þis land; and ðat lastede þa xix wintre wile Stephne was king, and ævre it was werse and werse. Hi læiden

<sup>1</sup> understood, perceived<sup>2</sup> homage<sup>3</sup> but<sup>4</sup> MS. he<sup>5</sup> every<sup>6</sup> oppressed<sup>7</sup> the making of castles<sup>8</sup> property<sup>9</sup> men<sup>10</sup> in pursuit of<sup>11</sup> tortured<sup>12</sup> unspeakable<sup>13</sup> they<sup>14</sup> foul<sup>15</sup> head<sup>16</sup> coats of mail<sup>17</sup> twisted<sup>18</sup> till it went<sup>19</sup> brain<sup>20</sup> prison<sup>21</sup> adders<sup>22</sup> toads<sup>23</sup> killed<sup>24</sup> torture-box<sup>25</sup> chest<sup>26</sup> pressed, jammed<sup>27</sup> device (?)<sup>28</sup> contrivance<sup>29</sup> chains, fetters<sup>30</sup> one<sup>31</sup> beam, rafter<sup>32</sup> MS. þa<sup>33</sup> neck<sup>34</sup> (go) in no direction

gældes<sup>1</sup> on the tunes ævre um wile,<sup>2</sup> and clepeden it tenserie.<sup>3</sup> Þa  
 þe wrecce men ne hadden nan more to gyven, þa ræveden<sup>4</sup> hi and  
 brendon<sup>5</sup> alle the tunes, ðat,<sup>6</sup> wel<sup>7</sup> þu myhtes faren all a dæis fare,<sup>8</sup>  
 sculdest thu nevre finden man in tune sittende ne land tiled.<sup>9</sup> Þa  
 was corn dære,<sup>10</sup> and fleisc<sup>11</sup> and cæse<sup>12</sup> and butere, for nan ne  
 wæs o þe land. Wrecce men sturven<sup>13</sup> of hungær; sume ieden<sup>14</sup> on  
 ælmes þe waren sum wile<sup>15</sup> rice men; sume flugen<sup>16</sup> ut of lande.  
 Wes nævre gæt mare wrecched<sup>17</sup> on land, ne nævre hethen men  
 werse ne diden þan hi diden; for ower<sup>18</sup> sithon<sup>19</sup> ne forbaren<sup>20</sup> hi  
 nouther circe<sup>21</sup> ne cyrceiærd,<sup>22</sup> oc namen al þe god ðat þarinne was,  
 and brenden sythen þe cyrce, and al tegædere. Ne hi ne forbaren  
 biscopes land, ne abbotes, ne preostes, ac ræveden munekes and  
 clerekes, and ævric man other<sup>23</sup> þe ower<sup>24</sup> myhte. Gif twa men oþer  
 iii a coman ridend to an tun, al þe tunsceipe flugæn for heom; wenden  
 ðat hi wæron ræveres.<sup>25</sup> Þe biscopes and lered men heom cursede<sup>26</sup>  
 ævre, oc was heom naht þarof, for hi weron al forcursæd and for-  
 suoren and forloren. Warsæ<sup>27</sup> me tilede, þe erthe ne bar nan corn,  
 for þe land was al fordon mid sulce dædes, and hi sæden openlice  
 ðat Crist slep and his halechen.<sup>28</sup> Suilc and mare þanne we cunnen  
 sæin, we þoleden<sup>29</sup> xix wintre for ure sinnes.

## BARBOUR, THE BRUCE

The *Bruce* was composed in 1375 by a northern contemporary of Chaucer, John Barbour (1320 (?)–1395), who was for thirty-eight years archdeacon of Aberdeen. Of Barbour's life comparatively little is known, but we learn that he received permits from the king to study at Oxford and in France, and was granted various pensions. Besides the *Bruce*, he wrote a poem called *The Brut*, and a genealogy of the Stuart family, both of which are lost.

<sup>1</sup> tributes; MS. gældes  
<sup>2</sup> from time to time  
<sup>3</sup> name given to a tax exacted  
 from vassals in return for  
 protection  
<sup>4</sup> plundered  
<sup>5</sup> burned  
<sup>6</sup> so that  
<sup>7</sup> though  
<sup>8</sup> journey  
<sup>9</sup> tilled

<sup>10</sup> dear, expensive  
<sup>11</sup> MS. flec  
<sup>12</sup> cheese  
<sup>13</sup> died, perished  
<sup>14</sup> went, lived  
<sup>15</sup> at one time  
<sup>16</sup> fled  
<sup>17</sup> wretchedness  
<sup>18</sup> everywhere; MS. ouer  
<sup>19</sup> afterwards  
<sup>20</sup> abstained from

<sup>21</sup> church  
<sup>22</sup> churchyard  
<sup>23</sup> each man his neighbor  
<sup>24</sup> anywhere; MS. ouer  
<sup>25</sup> robbers  
<sup>26</sup> excommunicated  
<sup>27</sup> wheresoever  
<sup>28</sup> saints  
<sup>29</sup> endured; MS. þoleden

The *Bruce* is called by its author a romance, though it has often been dealt with and criticized as history. 'We are hardly to regard it in the light of an exact history, but rather as a succession of episodes telling us various stories about the great perils and adventures of the heroes, the chief of whom are Robert Bruce, his brother Edward, Sir James Douglas, and Sir Thomas Randolph, afterwards Earl of Murray' (Skeat), the period covered being 1286-1332. The poem is divided into twenty books, and is written in the dialect of southern Scotland. While certain parts of it are undeniably tedious, it is of real interest for its national spirit, and has been influential upon so late a fellow-countryman of Barbour's as Sir Walter Scott. Barbour's unique position is that 'of being the father both of vernacular Scottish poetry and Scottish history' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*).

Our text is taken from that of Skeat, as edited for the Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh, 1894), with the omission of square brackets, substitution of *s* for *ss* (representing a single sound), and writing of *ȝ* as *z*, etc. Skeat's text is based on the Edinburgh manuscript, written in 1489, collated with the Cambridge MS. G. 23, and with several early editions. Our selections include lines 353-406 of Book 1, 352-452 of Book 10, and 18-49, 139-66, and 272-323 of Book 13. It is to be noted that *v* and *w* are frequently interchanged.

### SIR JAMES DOUGLAS

To Sanct Androws he come in hy,<sup>1</sup>  
 Quhar<sup>2</sup> the byschop full curtasly  
 Resavyt him, and gert<sup>3</sup> him wer  
 His knyvyys,<sup>4</sup> forouch<sup>5</sup> him to scher<sup>6</sup>;  
 5 And cled him rycht honorabilly,  
 And gert ordayn quhar he suld ly.  
 A weile<sup>7</sup> gret quhile thar duellyt he;  
 All men lufyt him for his bounte,  
 For he wes off full fayr effer,<sup>8</sup>  
 10 Wys, curtais, and deboner;  
 Larg<sup>9</sup> and luffand als wes he,  
 And our<sup>10</sup> all thing luffyt lawte.<sup>11</sup>  
 Leaute to luff<sup>12</sup> is gretumly<sup>13</sup>;  
 Throuch leaute liffis men rychtwisly;

<sup>1</sup> haste<sup>2</sup> where<sup>3</sup> made<sup>4</sup> knives, daggers<sup>5</sup> before<sup>6</sup> carve at table<sup>7</sup> very (well)<sup>8</sup> behavior<sup>9</sup> generous<sup>10</sup> over, above<sup>11</sup> loyalty<sup>12</sup> to be loved<sup>13</sup> greatly



With a wertu<sup>1</sup> of leaute  
 A man may ȝeit sufficyand be ;  
 And but<sup>2</sup> leawte may nane haiff price,<sup>3</sup>  
 Quhethir he be wycht<sup>4</sup> or he be wys ;  
 For quhar it failgeys, na wertu 5  
 May be off<sup>5</sup> price, na off valu,  
 To mak a man sa gud that he  
 May symply gud man callyt be.  
 He wes in all his dedis lele<sup>6</sup> ;  
 For him dedeynȝeit<sup>7</sup> nocht to dele 10  
 With trechery, na with falset.<sup>8</sup>  
 His hart on hey honour wes set ;  
 And hym contenyt<sup>9</sup> on sic<sup>10</sup> maner  
 That all him luffyt that war him ner.  
 Bot he wes nocht sa fayr that we 15  
 Suld spek gretly off his beaute :  
 In wysage wes he sumdeill gray,  
 And had blak har, as Ic hard say ;  
 Bot off lymmys he wes weill maid,  
 With banys<sup>11</sup> gret and schuldrys braid. 20  
 His body wes weyll maid and lenye,<sup>12</sup>  
 As thai that saw hym said to me.  
 Quhen he wes blyth, he wes luffly,  
 And meyke and sweyt in cumpany ;  
 Bot quha in battaill mycht him se, 25  
 All othir contenance had he.  
 And in spek<sup>13</sup> wlispyt<sup>14</sup> he sum deill,  
 Bot that sat<sup>15</sup> him rycht wondre weill.  
 Till<sup>16</sup> gud Ector of Troy mycht he  
 In mony thingis liknyt be. 30  
 Ector had blak har as he had,

1 virtue  
 2 without  
 3 praise  
 4 vigorous  
 5 of  
 6 leal, loyal

7 deigned  
 8 falsehood  
 9 he demeaned himself  
 10 such  
 11 bones  
 12 lean, thin

13 speech  
 14 lisped  
 15 became  
 16 to

- And stark <sup>1</sup> lymmys, and rycht weill maid ;  
 And whispyt alsua as did he,  
 And wes fullfyllt <sup>2</sup> of leawte,  
 And wes curtais, and wys, and wycht. <sup>3</sup>  
 5 Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,  
 Till Ector dar I nane comper  
 Off all that evir in warldys wer.  
 The quhethyr <sup>4</sup> in his tyme sa wrocht he,  
 That he suld gretly lovyt be.

## THE WINNING OF ROXBURGH CASTLE

- 10 This tym that the gud erll Thomas  
 Assegit, <sup>5</sup> as the lettir <sup>6</sup> sais,  
 Edinburgh, James of Douglas  
 Set all his vit for till purchas <sup>7</sup>  
 How Roxburgh, throu subtilite  
 15 Or ony craft, mycht wonnyn be ;  
 Till he gert Sym of the Ledows —  
 A crafty man and a curious —  
 Of hempyn rapis <sup>8</sup> ledderis ma, <sup>9</sup>  
 With treyn <sup>10</sup> steppis bundin swa,  
 20 That vald <sup>11</sup> brek apon na kyn wis. <sup>12</sup>  
 A cruk <sup>13</sup> thai maid, at thair deuis, <sup>14</sup>  
 Of irn, <sup>15</sup> that wes styth <sup>16</sup> and square ;  
 That, fra <sup>17</sup> it ane kyrnaill <sup>18</sup> ware,  
 And the leddir tharfra straty <sup>19</sup>  
 25 Strekit, <sup>20</sup> it suld stand sekirly. <sup>21</sup>  
 This lord of Douglas than, alsoyn <sup>22</sup>  
 As this devisit wes and done,

<sup>1</sup> strong<sup>2</sup> filled full<sup>3</sup> brave<sup>4</sup> nevertheless<sup>5</sup> besieged<sup>6</sup> written account<sup>7</sup> devise, contrive<sup>8</sup> ropes<sup>9</sup> make<sup>10</sup> wooden<sup>11</sup> would<sup>12</sup> in no way<sup>13</sup> large hook<sup>14</sup> according to their plan<sup>15</sup> iron<sup>16</sup> strong<sup>17</sup> from the time that, when<sup>18</sup> against a battlement<sup>19</sup> tightly<sup>20</sup> stretched<sup>21</sup> securely<sup>22</sup> as soon

Gaderit gud men in prevate <sup>1</sup>;  
 Thre score I trow at <sup>2</sup> thai mycht be.  
 And on the fasteryn evyn <sup>3</sup> rycht,  
 In the begynnyng of the nycht,  
 Till the castell thai tuk the vay. 5  
 With blak froggis <sup>4</sup> all helit <sup>5</sup> thai  
 The armouris at thai on thame had.  
 Thai com ner by thar but abaid, <sup>6</sup>  
 And send haly thair hors <sup>7</sup> thame fra,  
 And on range <sup>8</sup> in ane rod <sup>9</sup> can <sup>10</sup> ga <sup>11</sup> 10  
 On handis and feit, quhen thai war neir,  
 Richt as thai ky <sup>12</sup> and oxin weir,  
 That war unbondyn left therout.  
 It wes richt merk, <sup>13</sup> forouten <sup>14</sup> dout;  
 The quhethir <sup>15</sup> ane, on the wall that lay, 15  
 Besyde him till his feir <sup>16</sup> can say:  
 'This man thinkis to mak gude chere' —  
 And nemmyt <sup>17</sup> ane husband <sup>18</sup> tharby neir —  
 'That has left all his oxyne out.'  
 The tothir said, 'It is na dout; 20  
 He sall mak merye this nycht, thouch thai <sup>19</sup>  
 Be with <sup>20</sup> the Douglas led away.'  
 Thai wende the Douglas and his men  
 Had beyn oxyne, for thai geid <sup>21</sup> then  
 On handis and feit, ay ane and ane. 25  
 The Dowglas rycht gud tent <sup>22</sup> has tane <sup>23</sup>  
 Till all thar speke, <sup>24</sup> bot alssoyn <sup>25</sup> thai  
 Held, carpand, <sup>26</sup> inward on thar way.  
 The Douglas men tharof wes blith,

<sup>1</sup> secrecy<sup>2</sup> that<sup>3</sup> eve of the fast, Shrove  
Tuesday<sup>4</sup> frocks<sup>5</sup> covered, concealed<sup>6</sup> without delay<sup>7</sup> sent all their horses away<sup>8</sup> in single file<sup>9</sup> along a path (road)<sup>10</sup> did (gan)<sup>11</sup> go<sup>12</sup> cows<sup>13</sup> dark<sup>14</sup> without<sup>15</sup> nevertheless<sup>16</sup> companion (OE. *gefēra*)<sup>17</sup> named<sup>18</sup> husbandman, farmer<sup>19</sup> (the cattle)<sup>20</sup> by<sup>21</sup> went (OE. *ēode*)<sup>22</sup> attention<sup>23</sup> paid (taken)<sup>24</sup> speech<sup>25</sup> very soon<sup>26</sup> talking

And till the wall thai sped thame swith<sup>1</sup>;  
 And soyn has up thair ledderis set,  
 That maid a clap,<sup>2</sup> quhen the cleket<sup>3</sup>  
 Wes festnyt fast in the kyrnell.  
 5 That herd ane of the vachis<sup>4</sup> wele,  
 And buskit<sup>5</sup> thiddirward but baid<sup>6</sup>;  
 Bot Ledous, that the leddy maid,  
 Sped<sup>7</sup> hym to clym first to the wall;  
 Bot, or he wes up gottin all,  
 10 He at<sup>8</sup> that vard<sup>9</sup> had in keping,  
 Met him rycht at the upcummyng;  
 And, for<sup>10</sup> he thought to dyng<sup>11</sup> hym doune,  
 He maid na noys, na cry, na sowne,  
 Bot schot<sup>12</sup> till him deliverly.<sup>13</sup>  
 15 And he that wes in juperdy  
 Till de,<sup>14</sup> a lans<sup>15</sup> till him he maid,  
 And gat him be the nek but baid,  
 And stekit<sup>16</sup> him upward vith ane knyff,  
 Quhill in his hand he left the liff.<sup>17</sup>  
 20 And quhen he ded sa saw him ly,  
 Upon the wall he went in hy,  
 And doune the body kest thame till,  
 And said: 'All gangis<sup>18</sup> as we will;  
 Speid<sup>19</sup> zow upward deliverly.'  
 25 And thai did swa in full gret hy.  
 Bot, or thai wan<sup>20</sup> up, thar com ane,  
 And saw Ledows stand him allane,  
 And knew he wes nocht of thar men.  
 In hy he ruschit till hym then,  
 30 And hym assalzeit sturdely;  
 Bot he hym slew deliverly;

<sup>1</sup> quickly  
<sup>2</sup> noise  
<sup>3</sup> clicket, holdfast  
<sup>4</sup> watches, guards  
<sup>5</sup> hastened  
<sup>6</sup> without delay  
<sup>7</sup> hastened

<sup>8</sup> that  
<sup>9</sup> watch  
<sup>10</sup> because  
<sup>11</sup> throw  
<sup>12</sup> shot, dashed  
<sup>13</sup> nimbly  
<sup>14</sup> to die

<sup>15</sup> leap, dash  
<sup>16</sup> stabbed  
<sup>17</sup> life  
<sup>18</sup> goes  
<sup>19</sup> hasten  
<sup>20</sup> succeeded in getting

For he wes armyt and wes vycht.  
 The tothir nakyt <sup>1</sup> wes, I hicht, <sup>2</sup>  
 And had nocht for till stynt no strak. <sup>3</sup>  
 Sic melle <sup>4</sup> tharup <sup>5</sup> can he mak,  
 Quhill Douglas and his menghe <sup>6</sup> all 5  
 War wonnyn up apon the wall.  
 Than in the tour thai vent in hy.  
 The folk that tym wes halely <sup>7</sup>  
 Into <sup>8</sup> the hall at thair dansyng,  
 Synging, and othir wayis playing, 10  
 As apon fastryn evyn is  
 The custom, to mak joy and blis,  
 To folk that ar into savite <sup>9</sup>;  
 Swa trowit thai that tym to be.  
 Bot, or thai wist, rycht in the hall 15  
 Douglas and his men cummyn var all,  
 And cryit on hicht <sup>10</sup>: 'Douglas! Douglas!'  
 And thai, that ma <sup>11</sup> war than he was,  
 Herd 'Dowglas!' cryit rycht hydwisly, <sup>12</sup>  
 Thai war abasit <sup>13</sup> for the cry, 20  
 And schupe <sup>14</sup> richt na defens to ma. <sup>15</sup>  
 And thai but <sup>16</sup> pite can thame sla,  
 Till thai had gottyn the ovir <sup>17</sup> hand.

<sup>1</sup> unarmed<sup>2</sup> assure you<sup>3</sup> to oppose a blow (stop, a stroke)<sup>4</sup> such combat<sup>5</sup> up there<sup>6</sup> host<sup>7</sup> all of them<sup>8</sup> in<sup>9</sup> in safety<sup>10</sup> aloud<sup>11</sup> more<sup>12</sup> horribly<sup>13</sup> dismayed<sup>14</sup> attempted<sup>15</sup> make<sup>16</sup> without<sup>17</sup> upper

## THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN (A.D. 1314)

The closing incident of this selection may be compared with Scott's adaptation of it in *The Lord of the Isles* 6. 31-2. The story of the campaign, with a survey of the related events and conditions, has been told by W. M. Mackenzie, *The Battle of Bannockburn: A Study in Mediæval Warfare* (Glasgow, 1913).

The battale thair so felloun<sup>1</sup> was,  
 And sua richt gret spilling of blud,  
 That on the erd the flus<sup>2</sup> it stud.  
 The Scottis men so weill thame bar,  
 5 And sua gret slauchtir maid thai thar,  
 And fra so feill<sup>3</sup> the livis revit,<sup>4</sup>  
 That all the feild wes bludy levit.<sup>5</sup>  
 That tym thir thre battalis<sup>6</sup> wer  
 All syde be syde fechtand<sup>7</sup> weill neir,  
 10 Thar mycht man her<sup>8</sup> richt mony dynt,  
 And vapnys<sup>9</sup> apoun armour stynt,<sup>10</sup>  
 And se tummyll<sup>11</sup> knychtis and stedis,  
 With mony rich and ryoll<sup>12</sup> wedis<sup>13</sup>  
 Defoulit roydly<sup>14</sup> under feit.  
 15 Sum held on loft,<sup>15</sup> sum tynt<sup>16</sup> the suet.<sup>17</sup>  
 A long quhill thus fechtand thai wer,  
 That men no noyis na cry mycht her ;  
 Men herd nocht ellis bot granys<sup>18</sup> and dyntis,  
 That slew<sup>19</sup> fire, as men dois<sup>20</sup> on flyntis ;  
 20 Sa<sup>21</sup> faucht thai ilkane egirly  
 That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry,  
 Bot dang<sup>22</sup> on othir at thar mycht,  
 With wapnys that war burnyst brycht.  
 The arrowis als so thik thai flaw

<sup>1</sup> cruel<sup>2</sup> pool<sup>3</sup> many<sup>4</sup> took away<sup>5</sup> left<sup>6</sup> these three battalions<sup>7</sup> being fought<sup>8</sup> hear<sup>9</sup> weapons<sup>10</sup> clash, smite<sup>11</sup> tumble, fall<sup>12</sup> royal<sup>13</sup> garments<sup>14</sup> rudely<sup>15</sup> aloft<sup>16</sup> lost<sup>17</sup> life-blood (sweat)<sup>18</sup> groans<sup>19</sup> struck<sup>20</sup> do<sup>21</sup> so<sup>22</sup> struck

That thai mycht say weill, at <sup>1</sup> thaim saw,  
 That thai ane hydwis schour <sup>2</sup> can ma ;  
 For quhar thai fell, I wndirta, <sup>3</sup>  
 Thai left eftir thame taknyng, <sup>4</sup>  
 That sall neid, as I trow, lechyng. <sup>5</sup> 5  
 The Ynglis archeris schot so fast  
 That, mycht thar schot haf had last, <sup>6</sup>  
 It had beyne hard to Scottis men. . . .  
 For quhen the Scottis ynkirly <sup>7</sup>  
 Saw thair fais sa sturdely 10  
 Stand into <sup>8</sup> battale thame agane,  
 With all thar mycht and all thar mayne  
 Thai layd on, as men out of wit ;  
 For quhar thai with full strak <sup>9</sup> mycht hit,  
 Thair mycht no armyng <sup>10</sup> stynt thar strak ; 15  
 Thai tofruschit <sup>11</sup> thame thai mycht ourtak, <sup>12</sup>  
 And with axis sic duschis <sup>13</sup> gaff  
 That thai helmys and hedis claff.  
 And thair fais richt hardely  
 Met thame, and dang <sup>14</sup> on douchtely <sup>15</sup> 20  
 With wapnys that war stith <sup>16</sup> of steill.  
 Thar wes the battell strikyn <sup>17</sup> weill ;  
 So gret dynnyng ther wes of dyntis,  
 As wapnys apon armor styntis,  
 And of speris so gret bristing, <sup>18</sup> 25  
 With sic thrawing <sup>19</sup> and sic thristing, <sup>20</sup>  
 Sic gyrnyng, <sup>21</sup> granyng, <sup>22</sup> and so gret  
 A noyis, as thai can othir bet, <sup>23</sup>  
 And cryit ensengeis <sup>24</sup> on everilk syd,  
 Gifand and takand woundis wyd, 30

<sup>1</sup> that<sup>2</sup> shower<sup>3</sup> assert<sup>4</sup> token<sup>5</sup> healing<sup>6</sup> lasted<sup>7</sup> in particular, for their part<sup>8</sup> in<sup>9</sup> stroke<sup>10</sup> armor<sup>11</sup> crushed<sup>12</sup> overtake<sup>13</sup> severe blows<sup>14</sup> struck<sup>15</sup> valiantly<sup>16</sup> strong<sup>17</sup> engaged<sup>18</sup> breaking, bursting<sup>19</sup> throwing<sup>20</sup> thrusting<sup>21</sup> grinning<sup>22</sup> groaning<sup>23</sup> beat<sup>24</sup> war-cries

That it wes hydwiss for till her  
 All four the battelis,<sup>1</sup> wicht that wer,  
 Fechtand intill a front haly.<sup>2</sup>  
 Almychty God ! full doughtely  
 5 Schir Edward the Brys and his men  
 Amang thair fais<sup>3</sup> contenyt thame<sup>4</sup> then. .

For all the Scottis men that war thar,  
 Quhen thai saw thame<sup>5</sup> eschew the ficht,  
 Dang on thame swa with all thar mycht  
 10 That thai scalit<sup>6</sup> in tropellis<sup>7</sup> ser,<sup>8</sup>

And till discumfitur war ner ;  
 And sum of thame fled all planly.<sup>9</sup>  
 Bot thai that wicht war and hardy,  
 That schame letit<sup>10</sup> till ta<sup>11</sup> the flicht,  
 15 At gret myschef mantenyte<sup>12</sup> the ficht,  
 And stithly in the stour<sup>13</sup> can stand.

And quhen the king of Ingland  
 Saw his men fle in syndry<sup>14</sup> place,  
 And saw his fais rout,<sup>15</sup> that was  
 20 Worthyn<sup>16</sup> so wicht and so hardy,  
 That all his folk war halely<sup>17</sup>

Swa stonayit<sup>18</sup> that thai had no mycht  
 To stynt<sup>19</sup> thair fais in the ficht,  
 He was abasit<sup>20</sup> so gretumly<sup>21</sup>

25 That he and all his cumpany,  
 Fif hundreth armyt weill at rycht,  
 Intill a frusche<sup>22</sup> all tuk the flycht,  
 And till the castell held ther way.  
 And zeit, as I herd sum men say,  
 30 That of Wallanch Schir Amer,<sup>23</sup>

<sup>1</sup> battalions<sup>2</sup> abreast, all in one rank (?)<sup>3</sup> foes<sup>4</sup> demeaned themselves<sup>5</sup> the English<sup>6</sup> dispersed<sup>7</sup> small companies<sup>8</sup> separate<sup>9</sup> openly<sup>10</sup> prevented<sup>11</sup> from taking<sup>12</sup> maintained<sup>13</sup> combat, battle<sup>14</sup> sundry<sup>15</sup> host<sup>16</sup> become<sup>17</sup> entirely<sup>18</sup> astonished, dismayed<sup>19</sup> stop, check<sup>20</sup> cast down, discouraged<sup>21</sup> greatly, extremely<sup>22</sup> rush, sudden breaking of ranks<sup>23</sup> Sir Aymer de Valence



Quhen he the feld saw vencust<sup>1</sup> ner,  
 By the renge<sup>2</sup> led away the king,  
 Agane his will, fra the fichting.  
 And quhen Schir Gelis de Argente<sup>3</sup>  
 Saw the king thus, and his menze, 5  
 Schape thame<sup>4</sup> to fle so spedely,  
 He com richt to the kyng in hy,  
 And said: 'Schir, sen that it is swa  
 That ze thusgat<sup>5</sup> zour gat<sup>6</sup> will ga,  
 Haffis<sup>7</sup> gud day! for agane<sup>8</sup> will I; 10  
 Zheit fled I nevir sekirly;  
 And I cheis heir to byde and de,  
 Than till lif heir and schamfully fle.'  
 His brydill than but mair abaid<sup>9</sup>  
 He turnyt, and agane he raid, 15  
 And on Schir Eduard the Brysis<sup>10</sup> rout  
 That wes so sturdy and so stout,  
 As dreid of na kyn thing<sup>11</sup> had he,  
 He prikit,<sup>12</sup> cryand 'Argente!'  
 And thai with speris swa him met, 20  
 And swa feill speris on hym set,  
 That he and hors war chargit<sup>13</sup> swa  
 That bath doune to the erd can ga;  
 And in that place than slayne wes he.  
 Of his ded wes rycht gret pite; 25  
 He wes the thrid best knyght, perfay,  
 That men wist liffand in his day;  
 He did mony a fair journe.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> vanquished<sup>2</sup> rein<sup>3</sup> Giles de Argentine<sup>4</sup> prepare themselves<sup>5</sup> thus<sup>6</sup> way<sup>7</sup> have<sup>8</sup> (turn) back again<sup>9</sup> without more delay<sup>10</sup> Bruce's<sup>11</sup> no sort of thing<sup>12</sup> rode hard<sup>13</sup> pressed hard<sup>14</sup> day's fighting

26. thrid: the other two named by Lord Hailes (*Ann. Scot.* 2. 48) are the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg and Robert Bruce.

# STORIES OF TRAVEL

## SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE

The work which passes under the name of Sir John Mandeville was probably the production of a certain Jean de Bourgogne, called the Bearded, who died at Liège on November 17, 1372. According to the chronicle composed by Jean d'Outremeuse (1338-1399), this Jean de Bourgogne styled himself in his will Jean de Mandeville, and revealed on his deathbed to the chronicler that, having had the misfortune to kill an earl in his own country, England, he had bound himself to traverse three parts of the world. His tomb was to be seen at Liège till 1798, with an inscription which ran (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 36. 26): 'Hic jacet vir nobilis Dom. Joannes de Mandeville, alias dictus ad Barbam, Miles, Dominus de Campdi, natus de Anglia, medicinæ professor, devotissimus orator, et bonorum suorum largissimus pauperibus erogator, qui, toto quasi orbe lustrato, Leodii diem vitæ suæ clausit extremum, A.D. MCCCLXXII, mensis Nov. die XVII.'

Whatever traveling Mandeville (or Bourgogne) may have done, almost his whole work is a tissue of borrowings and adaptations from such writings as William of Boldensele's *Itinerary* (published 1336), Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerary* (1330), Hetoun the Armenian's *History of the Orient* (1307), the so-called *Epistle of Prester John*, etc. The work was first written in French, and afterwards translated into English, Latin, and a variety of other languages.

Dr. Warner says (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 36. 28): 'Avowedly written for the unlearned, and combining interest of matter and a quaint simplicity of style, the book hit the popular taste. . . . No mediæval work was more widely diffused in the vernacular.' Some three hundred manuscripts are said to be in existence. There are three English versions, of which two, both contained in manuscripts of 1410-1420, are superior to the other. One of these (in Cotton MS. Titus 6. 16) is the text generally found in print; the other, in Northern dialect (in Egerton MS. 1982), was published by G. F. Warner in 1889, with an excellent introduction and notes, and is that from which our extracts are taken. For fuller accounts see *Encyc. Brit.* and *Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v.; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2. 90-100.

## THE REBIRTH OF THE PHŒNIX

Text, p. 25. In order to show the relation of the English translation to the original, a passage of the French text printed by Dr. Warner is here reproduced; but it must be understood that this undoubtedly differs from the precise text on which the present English version is based:

En Egipte est la cite de Eliopole, cest a dire la cite de solail. En celle y ad une temple fait reonde, a la guise de temple de Jerusalem. Luy preistres de ceo temple ad

par escript la date del oysel qad a noun Fenix, qi nest qe un soul en monde, et se vient la arder sur laultre de ceo temple au chief de v<sup>c</sup> ans, qar tant vit il. Ly preistres appa-  
 raille et met sur cel aulter espices, et soufre vif, et autres choses qi legerement enflau-  
 ment, si qe ly oisel se vient ardoir tot en cendres. Et le primer iour apres lem troeve  
 as cendres un verm; et le secund iour lem trove loisel tot parfait; et le tiercz iour il  
 sen vole. Et ensi ni ad totdys qe un oisel soul de celle nature; et vrayment ceo est grant  
 miracle de Dieu. Et puet homme comparer cel oisel a Dieu, en ceo qe ni ad Dieu forsqe  
 un soul, et en ceo qe nostre Seignur resuscita le tiercz iour. Cest oisel veit homme souent  
 voler en celles parties. Et nest gairs pluis grant dun aigle; et il ad un crest sur la teste  
 pluis grant qe un paoun, et ad col tout iaune de la colour dun oriel bien lusant, et le dos  
 de ynde, et les aeles de purpre colour, et la cove reget de travers de iaune et de rouge.  
 Et est tres belle a veoir au solail, qar il tresluyt mult noblement.

In Egipte also es a citee pat es called Eliople,<sup>1</sup> pat es als mykill at  
 say<sup>2</sup> as pe citee of pe sonne. In pis citee es a temple, round in pe  
 maner of pe temple of Jerusalem. pe preste of pe temple has writen  
 in a buke pe date of a fewle<sup>3</sup> pat men calles Fenix; and per es bot  
 ane in all pe werld. And pis fewle liffes fyve hundreth gere; and at  
 pe fyve hundreth gere<sup>4</sup> end he commes to pe forsaid temple, and  
 apon pe awter he brynnes himself all to powder. And pe preste of  
 pe temple, pat knawes by his buke pe tyme of his commyng, makes  
 pe awter redy, and lays perapon diverse spiceries<sup>5</sup> and sulphure vive,<sup>6</sup>  
 and stikkes of pe junipre tree, and oþer thinges pat will sone brynne.  
 And þan the fewle commes, and lightes apon pe awter, and fannez  
 with his wenges ay till pe forsaid thinges be sett on fire; and þare he  
 brynnes himself all till asches. On pe morue<sup>7</sup> þai fynd in pe asches as  
 it ware a worme; on pe secund day pat worme es turned till a fewle  
 perfutely fourmed; and on pe thridd day it flies fra þat place to pe  
 place whare it was wont to dwell. And so per es nevermare bot ane.  
 Þis ilke fewle betakens oure Lord Jesu Criste, in als mykill as per  
 es bot a<sup>8</sup> Godd, pat rase on pe thridd day fra deed to lyfe. Þis for-  
 said fewle es ofttymes sene ayrand<sup>9</sup> aboute, when pe weder es faire  
 and clere; and þai say þare pat when þai see þat fewle sore in pe aer,  
 þai sall afterward hafe gude geres and miry; for þai say it es a fewle  
 of heven. And pis fewle es na mare þan ane egle of body. He has  
 on his heved a creste as a pacok, bot it es mykill mare þan pe creste

<sup>1</sup> Heliopolis, a short distance  
 from Cairo

<sup>2</sup> as much as to say

<sup>3</sup> bird

<sup>4</sup> year's

<sup>5</sup> spicy substances

<sup>6</sup> sulphur vivum, horse  
 brimstone

<sup>7</sup> morrow

<sup>8</sup> one

<sup>9</sup> moving in the air

of a pacok. His nekke es galow, and his back es ynde <sup>1</sup> colour; his wenges er reed, and his taile es barred overthwert <sup>2</sup> with grene and galowe and reed. And in þe sonne he semes wonder faire, for þir <sup>3</sup> er þe colours þat er fairest schewand.<sup>4</sup>

### THE PARADISE OF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

Text, pp. 137-8. Almost any encyclopædia, and the larger dictionaries under the word 'Assassin,' will give some information on the matter of this section. The Assassins were so called because they were intoxicated with hashish (see the 'maner of drinke' below). Mandeville draws from Odoric (Yule, *Cathay* 1. 153-5) or Marco Polo (Book 1, chap. 22); see Yule's notes to both. The 'old man,' or sheikh, derived his title from the mountainous region south of the Caspian which was under his sway. In particular, he had a mountain castle at Alamūt in the Elburz range, some ninety miles northwest of Teheran, and just south of a line joining Teheran and Rasht. The rise of this power may be assigned to 1090, or thereabouts, and the destruction of the castles where the sheikhs held sway to about 1256.

5 Besyde þe ile of Pentoxore, þe whilk es Prestre Johnez, es anoþer ile bathe lang and brade, þe whilk es called Mulstorak <sup>5</sup>; and it es under þe lordschepe of Prestre John. In þis ile es grete plentee of all maner of gudes and ricchess. And in þat land was sum tyme a riche man þat was called Catolonabes, and he was a grete man and a wonder wyly. And he had a faire castell and a strang, standand upon a hill, and he gert <sup>6</sup> make aboute it strang wallez and hie. And within þase wallez he gert make a faire gardyn, and plant þerin all maner of treez berand diverse fruytz. He gert plant þerin also all maner of erbez of gude smell, and þat bare faire floures. Þare ware also in þat  
15 gardyne many faire welles, and besyde þaim ware many faire halles and chaumbres, paynted with gold and azure wele and curiously with diverse storys, and with diverse maners of briddes, þe whilk semed, as þai sang and turned by engyne,<sup>7</sup> as þai had bene all quikke.<sup>8</sup> He putte also in þat gardyne all maner of fewles þat he myght get, and  
20 all maner of bestez þat he myght fynd, to make a man solace and disporte. And he putte also into þat gardyne faire damysellz within þe

<sup>1</sup> blue (indigo)

<sup>2</sup> crosswise

<sup>3</sup> these

<sup>4</sup> showing (i.e. to look upon)

<sup>5</sup> Melazgerd, in Armenia, north of Lake Van

<sup>6</sup> caused to

<sup>7</sup> mechanism

<sup>8</sup> alive

elde<sup>1</sup> of xv gere, þe fairest þat he mygt fynd, and knafe<sup>2</sup> childre of þe same elde; and þai ware all cledd in clathes of gold. And þase, he said, ware aungelles. Also he gert make in þe forsaid gardyn three faire welles of precious stanes, closed aboute with jasper and cristall, wele bunden with gold and oþer precious stanes. And he gert make cundytes<sup>3</sup> under þe erthe, so þat, when he wald, ane of þir<sup>4</sup> wellez ran of wyne, an oþer of mylke, an oþer of hony, thurgh þir forsaid cundytes. And þis place called he Paradys. And, when any zung bachelere of þe cuntree come to him, he ledd him into þis Paradys and schewed him all þise forsaid thingez. And he had diverse myn-  
 stralles prively in hye toure þat þai myght nogt be sene, playand on diverse instrumentez of music. And he said þat þai ware Goddes aungelles, and þat þat was Paradys þat Godd graunted to þase þat he lufes, sayand on þis wyse: *Dabo vobis terram fluentem lac et mel*,<sup>5</sup> þat es to say, 'I sall giffe to zow land flowande mylke and hony.'  
 And þan þis ryche man gafe to þise men a maner of drinke, of whilke þai ware drunken allsone<sup>6</sup>; and þan þai ware mare blinded þan þai ware before, and wend þai had bene in full blisse. And he said þam þat, if þai wald putte þaim in juperdy of deed<sup>7</sup> for his sake, when þai ware deed þai schuld com into his Paradys, and þai schuld ever-  
 mare be of þe elde of þe forsaid damyselles, and þai schuld evermare dwell with þam, and have lyking<sup>8</sup> and dalyaunce of þam, and evermare be maydens, and after a certayne tyme he schuld putte þam in a fairer Paradys, whare þai schuld see Godd in his majestee, and in his blisse and joy. And þan þai graunted at<sup>9</sup> do all þat he wald  
 bidd þam do. And þan he bad þam ga to swilk a place, and sla<sup>10</sup> swilke a lorde or man of þe cuntree, whilk was his enmy, and þat þai schuld hafe na drede, for, if þai ware deed, þai schuld be putte into þat Paradys. And þus gert he sla many lordes of þe cuntree; and also many of þise men ware slaen, in hope to hafe þis Paradys þat he  
 hight<sup>11</sup> þam. And þus he venged him on his enmys thurgh þis des-  
 sayte.<sup>12</sup> And when lordes and riche men of þe cuntree persayved þis malice and wyle of him, þis Catolonabes, þai gadred þam togyder and

<sup>1</sup> age<sup>2</sup> boy<sup>3</sup> conduits<sup>4</sup> these<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lev. 20. 24<sup>6</sup> at once<sup>7</sup> death<sup>8</sup> pleasure<sup>9</sup> to<sup>10</sup> slay<sup>11</sup> promised<sup>12</sup> deceit

assailed þis castell, and slew Catolonabes, and destruyd all his ricchess and faire thinges þat ware in his Paradys, and kest doune his castell; and ȝit er þe welles þare, and sum other thinges, bot na ricchess. It es noȝt lang sen it was destruyd.

### THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Text, p. 84. Mandeville is here indebted to the so-called *Letter of Prester John*, extant before 1177. The Latin runs (Zarncke, *Der Priester Johannes*, in *Abh. Phil.-Hist. Classe der Königl.-Sächs. Ges. der Wiss.*, Vol. 7, Leipzig, 1879, pp. 912-3): 'Quod nemus situm est ad radicem montis Olympi, unde fons perspicuus oritur, omnium in se specierum saporem retinens. Variatur autem sapor per singulas horas diei et noctis, et progreditur itinere dierum trium non longe a Paradyso, unde Adam fuit expulsus. Si quis de fonte illo ter jejunos gustaverit, nullam ex illa die infirmitatem patietur, semperque erit quasi in ætate XXX duorum annorum, quamdiu vixerit.' The European notions of the Fountain of Youth all go back to this, according to E. W. Hopkins ('The Fountain of Youth,' in *Jour. Am. Or. Soc.* 26 (1905). 32 ff.).

5 At þe heved of þis ilk forest es þe citee of Polombe; and besyde þat citee es a mountayne wharoff þe citee takez þe name, for men callez þe mountayne Polombe. And at þe fote of þis mountayne es a well, noble and faire; and þe water þeroff has a swete savour and reffaire,<sup>1</sup> as it ware of diverse maner of spicery. And ilke houre of þe  
10 day þe water chaungez diversely his savour and his smell. And wha so drinkez fastand thryes of þat well, he sall be hale of what maner of malady þat he hase. And forþi<sup>2</sup> þa<sup>3</sup> þat wonnez<sup>4</sup> nere þat well drynkez þeroff þe ofter, and þerfore þai hafe nevermare sekeness, bot evermare þai seme ȝung. I, John Maundevill, sawe þis well, and  
15 drank þeroff thrys and all my felawes, and evermare sen þat tyme I fele me þe better and þe haler, and suppose<sup>5</sup> for to do till þe tyme þat Godd of his grace will make me to passe oute of þis dedly lyf. Sum men callez þat well *Fons Juventutis*, þat es for to say, þe well of ȝowthe-hede<sup>6</sup>; for þai þat drinkez þeroff semez allway ȝung. And þai say þis

<sup>1</sup> odor

<sup>2</sup> therefore

<sup>3</sup> those

<sup>4</sup> dwell

<sup>5</sup> MS. supposez

<sup>6</sup> youth

5. Polombe: Quilon, or Quillon, not far from Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of India, on the west coast (Yule, *Cathay* 12. 71).

well commez fra Paradys terrestre,<sup>1</sup> for it es so vertuous. Thurgh-  
oute all þis cuntree þer growes þe best gynger þat es ower whare<sup>2</sup>;  
and marchaunds commez þider fra ferre cuntreez for to bye it.

## ST. THOMAS AND INDIAN IDOLATRY

Text, pp. 86-7. From Odoric, chaps. 18, 19 (Yule, *Cathay* 1. 80-83).

Fra þis land men gase by many diverse placez to a cuntree þat es  
called Mabaron<sup>3</sup>; and it es fra þe forsaid land x day-journee. And  
it es a grete rewme<sup>4</sup> and a large, and many gude citeez and tounes  
perin. In þat land of Mabaron liez Sayne Thomas þe apostle, and his  
body all hale, in a faire tounge in þe citee of Calamy<sup>5</sup>; for þare was  
he martird and graven.<sup>6</sup> Bot afterwarde þe Assirienes tuke his body,  
and bare it to a citee in Mesopotamy þat es called Edisse.<sup>7</sup> Bot eft-  
sones<sup>8</sup> it was translated agayne to þe foresaid citee, and layd in þe  
forsaid tounge; and his arme with his hand þat he putt in oure  
Lordes syde after his resurreccioun, when he said, *Noli esse incredulus,*  
*sed fidelis*,<sup>9</sup> lyez withouten in a vessell. And by that hand men of  
þat cuntree giffez þaire jugementz, to wit wha has rigt. For if any  
stryf be betwene twa parties, and ayther party affermez þat he has  
rigt in his cause, þan þai ger write in a scrowe<sup>10</sup> þe rigt of ayther party,  
and puttez þase billes in þe hand of Sayne<sup>11</sup> Thomas; and als fast<sup>12</sup> þe  
hand castez oute þe bille þat contenez þe fals cause, and þe toþer it  
haldez still. And þefore men commez oft tymes oute of ferre cuntreez  
þider, for to declare a rigtwys cause betwene party and party, þe whilk  
es in doute. Þe kirke whare Sayne Thomas lyes es mykill and faire,  
and full of ymagery of þaire mawmets<sup>13</sup>; and þase ymagez er ilk ane  
of þe stature of twa men at þe leste.

Bot þare es ane þat passez all oper of stature; and þat es richely and  
really<sup>14</sup> enoured<sup>15</sup> with gold and precious stanes all aboute, and sittez

<sup>1</sup> earthly

<sup>2</sup> anywhere where (redundant phrase)

<sup>3</sup> the Coromandel coast of southern India (Yule, *Cathay* 1. 80)

<sup>4</sup> realm

<sup>5</sup> St. Thomas, a few miles south of Madras

<sup>6</sup> buried

<sup>7</sup> Edessa, or Urfa, in Syria

<sup>8</sup> afterwards

<sup>9</sup> John 20. 27

<sup>10</sup> scroll

<sup>11</sup> saint

<sup>12</sup> as fast as might be, very fast

<sup>13</sup> false gods, idols (*lit.* Mahomets)

<sup>14</sup> royally

<sup>15</sup> adorned

in a chaier nobelly arraied. And he has aboute his nekk as it ware  
brade gyrdils<sup>1</sup> of silke, wele hernayst<sup>2</sup> with gold and preciouſe ſtanes.  
To þat ymage men commez fra ferre in pilgrimage with grete devo-  
cioun, als comounly als Crīſten men commez to Sayne James.<sup>3</sup> And  
5 ſum of þam, for þe grete devocioun þai haſe to þat mawmet, ay as þai  
ga, er lukand douneward to þe erthe, and will noȝt luke aboute þam,  
for þai ſchuld ſee nathing þat ſchuld lette þaire devocioun. Þare  
commez ſum alſo þider in pilgrimage þat beres ſcharpe knyfes in þaire  
handes, with whilk, ay as þai ga by þe way, þai wound þamſelf in þe  
10 legges and þe armes, and in oþer placez of þaire body, þat þe blude  
rynnez doune fra þer woundes in grete fuyſoun.<sup>4</sup> And þis þai do for  
lufe of þat ydole, and ſaiſe þat he es full bliſſed þat will dye for þe  
lufe of his mawmet. And ſum of þam bringez with þam þaire childer,  
and ſlaez þaim and makes ſacrifice of þam to þaire mawmet; and þai  
15 take þe blude of þaire childer, and ſprenklez it apon þe ymage. Sum,  
alſo, fra<sup>5</sup> þai paſſe oute of þer houſez til þai comme before þaire maw-  
met, at ilke a thridd paſſe knelis doune apon þe erthe with grete de-  
vocioun. And þai bring with þam incenſe and oþer thinges ſwete  
ſmelland, for to turify<sup>6</sup> þat ymage, as we do here to Goddeſ body.  
20 And þare es before þat ymage, as it ware, a poonde<sup>7</sup> or a vyver,<sup>8</sup> full  
of water; and into þat pilgrimes caſtez gold and ſilver and precious  
ſtanes withouten noumer, inſteed of offerand. And forþi þe mynī-  
ſters þat kepez þat ilk mawmet, when þai haſe miſter<sup>9</sup> of any monee  
for reparailynȝ of þaire kirk, or for any oþer thing þat fallez to þat  
25 ilke mawmet, þai ga to þat ilke poonde, and takez oute þeroff alſo  
mykill as þam nedeſ. And ȝe ſchall underſtand þat, when grete feſtez  
commez of þat mawmet, as þe dedicacioun of þe kirk or þe tronyng<sup>10</sup>  
of þat mawmet, all þe cuntree aſſemblez þider; and þai ſett þis maw-  
met with grete wiſchepe in a chariot, wele arraied with clathez of gold  
30 and of ſilke, and ledez him with grete ſollempnitee aboute þe citee.  
And before þe chariot gaſe firſt in proceſſioun all þe maydens of þe  
cuntree, twa and twa toȝyder; and þan all þe pilgrymmes þat commez  
þider fra ferre cuntreez, of whilke ſum for þe grete devocioun þai

<sup>1</sup> a broad girdle<sup>2</sup> ornamented<sup>3</sup> Saint James of Compoſtella<sup>4</sup> abundance, profuſion<sup>5</sup> from the time when<sup>6</sup> incenſe<sup>7</sup> pond<sup>8</sup> aquarium (*vivarium*)<sup>9</sup> need<sup>10</sup> throning



hafe to þat mawmet fallez doune before þe chariot, and latez it gang  
 over þam. And so er sum of þam slayne, sum þaire armes and sum  
 þaire schankes broken; and þai trowe þat, þe mare payne þai suffer  
 here for lufe of þaire mawmet, þe mare joy in þe toþer werld sall þai  
 hafe, and þe nerre þaire godd sall þai be. And sikerly þai suffer so  
 mykill payne and martirdom apon þaire bodys for þe lufe of þat ilke  
 mawmet, þat unnethes<sup>1</sup> will any Cristen man suffer half so mykill,  
 ne þe tende<sup>2</sup> parte, for þe lufe of oure Lorde Jesu Criste.

## THE SULTAN OF EGYPT

Text, pp. 20-1

þe sowdan<sup>3</sup> has three wyfes, of þe wilke ane sall be a Cristen  
 womman, and þe oþer twa Sarezenes. And ane of þir wyfes sall dwell  
 in Jerusalem, an oþer at Damasc, and þe thridd at Ascalon.<sup>4</sup> And, ay  
 when him list, he gase to visit þam, and umqwhyte<sup>5</sup> ledes þam aboute  
 with him. Noght forþi<sup>6</sup> he has lemmanes, als many as him list have;  
 for, when he comes till any citee or toune, he gers bring before him  
 all þe nobilest and þe fairest maydens of þe cuntree nere aboute, and  
 he gers þam be keped honestly and wirschipfully. And, when he will  
 hafe any of þam, he gers þaim all be broght before him, and wha so  
 es maste lykand till him, he sendes till hir or takes þe ryng off his  
 fynger, and castez till hir. And þan sall scho be tane,<sup>7</sup> and waschen  
 and bawmed<sup>8</sup> and wirschipfully cledd, and after souper be broght till  
 his chaumbre. And þus he duse ay when he will. Before þe sowdan  
 sall na straunger com þat he ne sall be cledd in clathe of gold or tars<sup>9</sup>  
 or in chamelet,<sup>10</sup> a maner of clething whilk þe Sarzenes usez. And als  
 sone as he has sight of þe sowdan, be it at wyndow or elleswhere,  
 him behoves knele doune and kisse þe erthe; for swilk es þe maner  
 þare to do reverence to þe sowdan, when any man will speke with  
 him. And when any straungers commes till him in message<sup>11</sup> oute of  
 ferre landes, his men sall stand aboute him with drawen swerdes in  
 handes, and þer handes up on loft,<sup>12</sup> to stryke þam doune, if þai speke

<sup>1</sup> scarcely, with difficulty<sup>2</sup> tenth<sup>3</sup> sultan<sup>4</sup> West of Jerusalem, on the coast<sup>5</sup> from time to time<sup>6</sup> none the less<sup>7</sup> taken<sup>8</sup> anointed<sup>9</sup> a rich Oriental stuff<sup>10</sup> damasked silk<sup>11</sup> on an embassy<sup>12</sup> aloft

any thing þat displesez þe sowdan. þare sall na straunger com before him for to ask him any thing þat ne his asked sall be graunted him, if it be resounable and nogt agayne þaire lawe. And rigt so duse all oþer princez and lordes in þat cuntree; for þai say þat na man suld  
5 com before a prince þat he ne schuld passe gladder away þan he come þiderward.

## THE EARTH IS ROUND

Text, pp. 90-2

And ge schall understand þat in þis land, and in many oþer þare-  
about, men may nogt see þe sterne<sup>1</sup> þat es called *Polus Articus*,  
whilk standes even north and stirrez never, by whilk schippemen er  
10 ledd, for it es nogt sene in þe south. Bot þer es anoþer sterne, wilke  
es called antartic, and þat es even agayne<sup>2</sup> þe toþer sterne; and by  
þat sterne er schippemen ledd þare, as schippemen er ledd here by  
*Polus Articus*. And, rigt as þat sterne may nogt be sene here, on þe  
same wyse þis sterne may nogt be sene þare. And þareby may men  
15 see wele þat þe world es all rounde; for parties<sup>3</sup> of þe firmament  
whilk may be sene in sum cuntree may nogt be sene in anoþer. And  
þat may men prove þus. For, if a man myght fynd redy schipping  
and gude company, and þerto had his hele,<sup>4</sup> and wald ga to see þe  
world, he myght ga all aboute þe world, bathe aboven and benethe.  
20 And þat prufe I þus, after<sup>5</sup> þat I hafe sene. For I hafe bene in  
Braban,<sup>6</sup> and sene by þe astrolaby<sup>7</sup> þat þe pole artyc es þare liii de-  
grees hegh, and in Almayne<sup>8</sup> towardes Boem<sup>9</sup> it has lviii degrez, and  
forþermare<sup>10</sup> toward þe north it has lxii degrez of height and sum  
mynutes. All þis I persayved by þe astrolaby. And ge schall under-  
25 stand þat in þe south, even ynentes<sup>11</sup> þis sterne, es þe sterne þat es  
called pole antartic. Þise twa sternes stirrez never mare; and aboute  
þaim movez þe firmament, as a qwhele<sup>12</sup> duse aboute ane axeltree.  
And so þe lyne þat es betwene þise twa sternes departez<sup>13</sup> all þe firma-  
ment in twa partes, ayther ylike mykill.<sup>14</sup> Afterwardes I went toward

<sup>1</sup> star<sup>2</sup> exactly opposite to<sup>3</sup> parts<sup>4</sup> health<sup>5</sup> according to<sup>6</sup> Brabant<sup>7</sup> astrolabe<sup>8</sup> Germany<sup>9</sup> Bohemia<sup>10</sup> further<sup>11</sup> exactly opposite<sup>12</sup> wheel<sup>13</sup> separates<sup>14</sup> much alike

þe south, and I fand þat in Liby<sup>1</sup> seez men first þe sterne antartyke ;  
 and, as I went ferrer, I fand þat in hie Liby it hase in height xviii de-  
 greez and sum mynutes, of whilke mynutes lx makez a degre. And  
 so, passand by land and by see toward þe cuntree þat I spakk off  
 are,<sup>2</sup> and oþer landes and iles þat er bezond, I fand þat þis sterne 5  
 antartik had in height xxxiii degreze. And, if I had had cumpany  
 and schipping þat wald hafe gane ferrer, I trow forsothe þat we schuld  
 hafe sene all þe roundeness of þe firmament, þat es to say bathe þe  
 emisperies,<sup>3</sup> þe uppermare and þe nedermare.<sup>4</sup> For, as I sayd ȝow  
 before, halfe þe firmament es betwene þise twa sternes ; þe whilk I 10  
 hafe sene. . . . And þerfore I say sikerly þat a man myght go all þe  
 world aboute, bathe aboven and bynethe, and comme agayne to his  
 awen cuntree, so þat he had his hele, gude schipping, and gude com-  
 pany, as I said before. And all way he schuld fynd men, landes, and  
 iles and citeez and townes, as er in þir cuntrees. For ȝe wate wele 15  
 þat þase men þat dwellez even under þe pole antartyk er fote agayne  
 fote to þase þat dwellez even under þe pole artyke, als wele as we  
 and þase men þat dwellez agaynes us er fote agayne fote ; and riȝt  
 so it es of oþer parties of þe world. For ilke a party of þe erthe and  
 of þe see hase his contrary of thinges, whilk er even<sup>6</sup> agaynes him. 20  
 And ȝe schall understand þat, as I conjecture, þe land of Prestre John,  
 Emperour of Inde, es even under us. For, if a man schall ga fra  
 Scotland or Ingland unto Jerusalem, he sall ga all way upward. For  
 oure land es þe lawest<sup>6</sup> party of þe west, and þe land of Prestre John  
 es in þe lawest party of þe este. And þai hafe day when we hafe nyght, 25  
 and nyght when we hafe day. And, als mykill as a man ascendes  
 upward oute of oure cuntreez to Jerusalem, als mykill schall he go  
 dounward to þe land of Prestre John ; and þe cause es for þe erthe  
 and þe see er rounde. For it es þe comoun worde þat Jerusalem es  
 in myddes of þe erthe ; and þat may wele be proved þus. For, and a 30  
 man þare take a spere and sett it even in þe erthe at midday, when  
 þe day and þe nyght er bathe ylyke lang, it makez na schadowe till na  
 party.<sup>7</sup> And David also beres witnes þeroff, þare he saise : *Deus autem*

<sup>1</sup> Libya<sup>2</sup> before<sup>3</sup> hemispheres<sup>4</sup> nether<sup>5</sup> just, exactly<sup>6</sup> lowest<sup>7</sup> direction

*rex noster ante secula operatus est salutem in medio terre*,<sup>1</sup> þat es to say :  
 'Godd oure kyng before þe begynnyng of þe werld wrought hele in  
 myddes of þe erthe.' And þerfore þai þat gase oute of oure cuntreez  
 of þe west toward Jerusalem, als many journez<sup>2</sup> as þai make to ga  
 5 þider upward, als many journez sall þai make to ga in to þe land of  
 Prestre John dounward fra Jerusalem. And so he may ga into þase  
 iles envirounand all þe roundness of þe erthe and of þe see, till he  
 com even under us. And þerfore I hafe ofttymes thoght on a tale þat  
 I herd, when I was gung, how a worthy man of oure cuntree went  
 10 on a tyme for to see þe werld; and he passed Inde<sup>3</sup> and many iles  
 bygonde Inde, whare er ma þan v<sup>m</sup><sup>4</sup> iles, and he went so lang by land  
 and by see, envirounand þe werld, þat he fand ane ile whare he herd  
 men speke his awen langage. For he herd ane<sup>5</sup> dryfe bestez, sayand  
 to þam swilke wordes as he herd men say til oxen in his awen cun-  
 15 tree gangand at þe plugh; of whilk he had grete mervaile, for he wist  
 nogt how it myght be. Bot I suppose he had so lang went<sup>6</sup> on land  
 and on see, envirounand þe werld, þat he was commen in to his awen  
 marchez<sup>7</sup>; and, if he had passed forþermare, he schuld hafe commen  
 even to his awen cuntree. Bot for he herd þat mervaile, and myght  
 20 get schipping na ferrere, he turned agayne as he come; and so he  
 had a grete travaile. And it befell efterward þat he went into Nor-  
 way; and a tempest of wynd in þe see drafe him, so þat he arryved  
 in ane ile. And, when he was þare, he wist wele it was þe ile in whilk  
 he had bene before and herd his awen speche, as men drafe bestez.  
 25 And þat myght wele be; þof all<sup>8</sup> it be þat symple men of cunnyng  
 trowe nogt þat men may ga under þe erthe bot-if<sup>9</sup> þai fall unto þe  
 firmament. For as us think<sup>10</sup> þat þase men er under us, so think þaim  
 þat we er under þaim.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 74. 12<sup>2</sup> day's journeys<sup>3</sup> India<sup>4</sup> five thousand<sup>5</sup> one, a man<sup>6</sup> traveled<sup>7</sup> borders<sup>8</sup> even though<sup>9</sup> unless<sup>10</sup> it seems to us

## THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE

Text, pp. 149-50. To afford an opportunity of comparison with the current Southern text, the beginning of this section is here transcribed from Halliwell's reprint (London, 1839, p. 303), with changes in capitalization: 'And begonde the lond and the yles and the desertes of Prestre Johnes lordschipe, in goynge streyght toward the est, men fynde nothing but mountaynes and roches fulle grete: and there is the derke regyoun, where no man may see, nouthur be day ne be nyght, as thei of the contree seyn. And that desert and that place of derknesse duren fro this cost unto Paradys Terrestre, where that Adam, oure foremost fader, and Eve weren putt, that dwelleden there but lytylle while; and that is towards the est, at the begynnyng of the erthe.'

For the subject in general, see Coli, *Il Paradiso Terrestre Dantesco*, Florence, 1897.

Bezond pir ilez þat I hafe-talde ȝow off, and þe desertez of þe lordschep of Prestre John, to ga even <sup>1</sup> est, es na land inhabited, as I said before, bot wastez and wildernesses, and grete rochez and mountaynes, and a myrk <sup>2</sup> land, whare na man may see, nyght ne day, as men of þas cuntreez talde us. And þat mirk land and pase desertez 5 laste riȝt to Paradys terrestre, wharein Adam and Eve ware putte; bot þai ware þare bot a lytill while. And þat place es toward þe este, at þe begynnyng of þe erthe. Bot þat es noght oure este, whare þe sonne risez till us; for when þe sonne risez in pase cuntreez, þan es it mid-nyght in our cuntree, because of þe roundness of þe erthe. For, as I 10 said before, Godd made þe erthe all rounde, in myddez of þe firmament. Bot þe hillez and þe valays þat er now on þe erthe er noght bot of Noe flude, thurgh þe whilk þe tendre erthe was remowed fra his place, and þare become a valay, and þe hard erthe habade <sup>3</sup> still, and þare er now hilles. 15

Off Paradys can I noght speke properly, for I hafe noght bene þare; and þat forthinkez <sup>4</sup> me. Bot als mykill as I hafe herd of wyse men, and men of credence, of pase cuntreez, I will tell ȝow. Paradys terrestre, as men saise, es þe hiest land of þe werld; and it es so hye þat it touchez nere to þe cercle of þe moone. For it es so hye þat 20 Noe <sup>5</sup> flode myght noght com þerto, whilk flude coverd all þe erthe bot it. Paradys es closed all aboute with a wall; bot whareoff þe wall es

<sup>1</sup> directly

<sup>2</sup> dark, gloomy

<sup>3</sup> abode

<sup>4</sup> that I regret

<sup>5</sup> Noah's

made, can na man tell. It es all mosse-begrowen, and coverd so with mosse and with bruschez þat men may see na stane, ne noȝt elles wharoff a wall schuld be made. Þe walle of Paradys strechez fra þe south toward þe north; and þer es nane entree open into it, because  
 5 of fire evermare brynnand, þe whilk es called þe flawmand swerde<sup>1</sup> þat Godd ordaynd þare before þe entree, for na man schuld entre.

In þe middes of Paradys es a well, out of þe whilke þer commez foure flodez,<sup>2</sup> þat rynnez thurgh diverse landez. Þir<sup>3</sup> flodez sinkez doune into þe erthe within Paradyse, and rynnez so under þe erthe many a  
 10 myle, and afterwardes comme þai up agayne oute of þe erthe in ferre cuntreez.

## SIR JOHN'S MODESTY

Text, pp. 155-6

Þare er many oper cuntreez and oper mervailles whilk I hafe noȝt sene, and þerfore I can noȝt speke properly of þam; and also in cuntreez whare I hafe bene er many mervailles of whilk I speke noȝt, for it  
 15 ware owere<sup>4</sup> lang to tell. And also I will tell na mare of mervailles þat er þare, so þat oper men þat wendez þider may fynd many new thingez to speke off, whilk I hafe noȝt spoken off. For many men hase grete lykyng and desyre for to here new thinges; and þerfore will I now ceesse of tellyng of diverse thingez þat I sawe in þase cuntreez, so þat  
 20 þase þat covetez to visit þase cuntreez may fynd new thinges ynewe to tell off, for solace and recreacioun of þaim þat lykez to here þam.

And I, JOHN MAWNDEVILL, knyght, þat went oute of my cuntree, and passed þe see, þe ȝere of oure Lord Jesu Criste MCCCXXXII, and hase passed thurgh many landes, cuntreez, and iles, and hase bene  
 25 at many wirschipfull journeez<sup>5</sup> and dedez of armez with worthy men — if all<sup>6</sup> I be unworþi — and now am commen to rest, as man discomfitt for age and travaile and febilness of body, þat constraynez me þarto, and for oper certayne causez, I hafe compiled þis buke and writen it, as it coome to my mynde, in þe ȝere of oure Lord Jesu  
 30 Criste MCCCLXVI, þat es for to say, in þe foure and thrityde ȝere efter þat I departed oute of þis land, and tuke my way þiderward.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 3. 24<sup>2</sup> Gen. 2. 10 ff.<sup>3</sup> these<sup>4</sup> too<sup>5</sup> days of battle<sup>6</sup> even if

And for als mykill as many men trowez nogt bot þat at<sup>1</sup> þai see  
 with þaire eghen, or þat þai may consayve with þaire awen kyndely<sup>2</sup>  
 wittes, þerfore I made my way in my commyng hamward unto Rome,  
 to schew my buke till oure Haly Fader þe Pape. And I tald him þe  
 mervailles whilk I had sene in diverse cuntreez, so þat he, with his<sup>5</sup>  
 wyse counsaile, wald examyne it with diverse folke þat er in Rome—  
 for þare er evermare dwelland men of all naciouns of þe werld. And  
 a lytill after, when he and his wyse counsaile had examynde it all  
 thurgh, he said to me for certayne þat all was soth þat was þerin.  
 For he said þat he had a buke of Latyn þat conteyned all þat and<sup>10</sup>  
 mykill mare, after whilk buke the *Mappa Mundi* es made; and þat  
 buke he schewed me. And þerfore oure Haly Fader þe Pape hase  
 ratified and confermed my buke in all poyntes.

Qwherfore I pray til all þase þat redez þis buke, or heres it redd, þat  
 þai will pray for me, and I schall pray for þaim. And all þase þat saise<sup>15</sup>  
 for me devoutely a *Pater Noster* and ane Ave, þat Godd forgife me my  
 synnez, he graunt þam parte of all my pilgrimage, and all oþer gude  
 dedis þat I hafe done, or may do in tyme commyng unto my lyfez end.  
 And I, in þat in me es, makez þam parceres<sup>3</sup> of me,<sup>4</sup> prayand to  
 Godd, of wham all grace commez, þat he fulfill with his grace all þase<sup>20</sup>  
 þat þis buke redez or heres, and save þam and kepe þam in body and  
 saule, and after þis lyf bring þam to þe cuntree whare joy es, and  
 endles rest, and peesse withouten end. Amen.

## A PILGRIMAGE BY SEA TO COMPOSTELLA

The manuscript containing this poem has been ascribed to the time of  
 Henry VI (1422–1471). It is here printed from Furnivall's edition of *The  
 Stations of Rome* (E.E.T.S. No. 25).

Men may leve alle gamys<sup>5</sup>  
 That saylen to Seynt Jamys,<sup>6</sup>  
 Ffor many a man hit gramys,<sup>7</sup>  
 When they begyn to sayle;

25

<sup>1</sup> that<sup>2</sup> natural, native<sup>3</sup> sharers, partners<sup>4</sup> MS. þam<sup>5</sup> put aside all mirth<sup>6</sup> Santiago de Compostella, in the province  
 of Galicia, in northwestern Spain<sup>7</sup> distresses

Ffor when they have take the see  
 At Sandwyche<sup>1</sup> or at Wynchylsee,<sup>2</sup>  
 At Brystow,<sup>3</sup> or where that hit bee,  
 Theyr hertes begyn to fayle.

5 Anone the mastyr commaundeth fast  
 To hys shypmen, in alle the hast,<sup>4</sup>  
 To dresse<sup>5</sup> hem sone about the mast,  
 Theyr takelyng to make ;  
 With ' Howe ! hissa ! ' then they cry ;  
 10 ' What, howe ! mate, thow stondyst to<sup>6</sup> ny,  
 Thy felow may nat hale<sup>7</sup> the<sup>8</sup> by ' ;  
 Thus they begyn to crake.<sup>9</sup>

A boy or tweyn anone upstyen,<sup>10</sup>  
 And overthwart the sayle-yerde lyen.  
 15 ' Y how ! taylia ! ' the remenaunt cryen,  
 And pulle with alle theyr myght.  
 ' Bestowe<sup>11</sup> the boote,<sup>12</sup> boteswayne, anon,  
 That our pylgryms may pley theron ;  
 For som ar lyke to cowgh and grone  
 20 Or<sup>13</sup> hit be full mydnyght.'

' Hale the bowelyne<sup>14</sup> ! now, vere the shete ! —  
 Cooke, make redy anoon our mete ! '  
 ' Our pylgryms have no lust to ete,  
 I pray God yeve hem rest.'  
 25 ' Go to the helm ! what, howe ! no nere<sup>15</sup> ! ' —  
 ' Steward, felow, a pot of bere ! '  
 ' Ye shalle have, sir, with good chere,  
 Anon alle of the best.'

<sup>1</sup> north of Dover

<sup>2</sup> southwest of Dover, in Sussex

<sup>3</sup> Bristol

<sup>4</sup> all haste

<sup>5</sup> make ready

<sup>6</sup> too

<sup>7</sup> haul

<sup>8</sup> thee

<sup>9</sup> call aloud

<sup>10</sup> climb

<sup>11</sup> stow

<sup>12</sup> boat

<sup>13</sup> ere

<sup>14</sup> a rope made fast to the middle part of the outside of a sail

<sup>15</sup> nearer (no closer to the wind?)



'Y howe! trussa! hale in the brayles<sup>1</sup>!  
 Thow halyst nat, be God, thow fayles!'—  
 'O se howe welle owre good shyp sayles!'

And thus they say among.

'Hale in the wartake<sup>2</sup>!' 'Hit shal be done.'— 5  
 'Steward, cover the boorde anone,  
 And set bred and salt therone,  
 And tary nat to long!'

Then cometh oone and seyth: 'Be mery,  
 Ye shall have a storme or a pery.'<sup>3</sup> 10  
 'Holde thow thy pese! thow canst no whery,<sup>4</sup>  
 Thow medlyst wondyr sore.'  
 Thys menewhyle<sup>5</sup> the pylgryms ly,  
 And have theyr bowlys fast theym by,  
 And cry aftyr hote malvesy<sup>6</sup>: 15  
 'Thow helpe for to restore.'

And som wold have a saltyd tost,<sup>7</sup>  
 Ffor they myght ete neyther sode<sup>8</sup> ne rost;  
 A man myght sone pay for theyr cost,  
 As for oo day or twayne. 20  
 Som layde theyr bookys on theyr kne,  
 And rad<sup>9</sup> so long they myght nat se.  
 'Allas, myne hede wolle cleve on thre!'  
 Thus seyth another certayne.

Then commeth owre owner, lyke a lorde, 25  
 And speketh many a royall worde,  
 And dresseth hym to the hygh borde,  
 To see alle thyng be welle.  
 Anone he calleth a carpentere,  
 And byddyth hym bryng with hym hys gere,<sup>10</sup> 30

<sup>1</sup> small ropes fastened to the  
 edges of sails

<sup>2</sup> (?)

<sup>3</sup> squall

<sup>4</sup> (?)

<sup>5</sup> in the meantime

<sup>6</sup> malmsey

<sup>7</sup> toast

<sup>8</sup> anything boiled

<sup>9</sup> read

<sup>10</sup> tools

To make the cabans here and there,  
With many a febylle<sup>1</sup> celle.

A sak of strawe were there ryght good,  
Ffor som must lyg<sup>2</sup> theym in theyr hood ·  
5 I had as lefe be in the wood,  
Without[e] mete or drynk.

For when that we shall go to bedde,  
The pumpe is<sup>3</sup> nygh oure beddes hede ;  
A man were as good be<sup>4</sup> dede  
10 As smell therof the stynk.

<sup>1</sup> slightly built

<sup>2</sup> lie

<sup>3</sup> MS. was

<sup>4</sup> MS. to be

## RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC PIECES

### ROLLE, THE FORM OF PERFECT LIVING

Richard Rolle, who was born near the end of the thirteenth century (the year is not known) at Thornton Dale, near Pickering in northern Yorkshire, was a hermit and mystic who wrote the first *original* [since the *Ancren Riwe* is translated] English prose after the Conquest (Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 218). In his early youth he was sent as a student to Oxford, but was repelled by the scholastic philosophy there dominant, and made up his mind to turn to a life of contemplation. For the next four years he lived in a solitary cell on the estate of friends who provided him with the necessities of life, and there he passed through three stages of the contemplative life — *purificatio*, *illuminatio*, and *contemplatio* proper (cf. H. O. Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind* 2. 362 ff.), in the last of which he had the mystic sense of the direct vision of God. After traveling about for some time, in the hope of teaching his faith, as to which he met with little encouragement and considerable opposition, he settled near the recluse Margaret Kirkby at Ainderby, near Northallerton (famous for the Battle of the Standard), also in the North Riding, where he gave assistance and instruction to her and other recluses. Later he lived and wrote at Hampole, five miles northwest of Doncaster, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where he died in 1349, and whence he has come to be known as Richard Rolle of Hampole.

Rolle was a figure apparently but little heeded by the authorities of his own time, yet one of real significance. In his emphasis on the direct relation between the individual soul and God, rather than on mere obedience to the Church, he was a forerunner of Wycliffe and Luther; and through the fervor of his mystical outpourings, he still makes a strong emotional appeal.

His works, which it is hard in some cases to distinguish from those of his imitators and translators, were sometimes written in Latin and sometimes in English, one of the best known of those in English being a long poem, *The Prick of Conscience*. His editor Horstman says of him: 'His chief characteristic as a writer is originality—he is essentially a genius; everywhere he cuts out new ways, lays new foundations. Next, he is preëminently a lyric; whether he writes in prose or verse, he writes from feeling, from momentary inspiration. Besides, he is of a remarkable versatility and facility; he writes with equal ease in Latin and English, in verse and prose, and in all kinds of verse, frequently mixing prose and verse in the same work; he writes postils, commentaries, epistles, satires, polemic treatises, prayers and devotions, lyric and didactic poetry, epigrams' (2. xxxv). Our selections are from his epistle known

as *The Form of Perfect Living*, as it appears in MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64, where it is dedicated to the recluse Margaret. For this text, and for an extended account of Richard Rolle and his place in the history of mysticism, see *Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed. C. Horstman, London, 1895, in *Yorkshire Writers (Library of Early English Writers)*. Our selections are from Vol. 1, pp. 29-30, 46-9.

## THE LOVE OF GOD

*Amore langueo.* Þir<sup>1</sup> twa wordes er<sup>2</sup> wryten in þe boke of lufe, þat es kalled þe Sang of Lufe, or þe Sang of Sanges. For he þat mykel<sup>3</sup> lufes, hym lyst<sup>4</sup> oft syng of his luf, for joy þat he or scho hase when þai thynk on þat þat þai lufe, namely<sup>5</sup> if þair lover be trew and lufand.

5 And þis es þe Inglisch of thies twa wordes: 'I languysch for lufe.' Sere<sup>6</sup> men in erth has sere gyftes and graces of God, bot þe special gift of þas þat ledes solitary lyf es for to lufe Jesu Criste. Þow says me: 'All men lufes hym þat haldes<sup>7</sup> his comawndementes.' Soth it es. Bot all men þat kepes hys byddyngs kepes noght also hys cown-

10 sayle. And all þat dos his cownsell er noght also fulfylde of<sup>8</sup> þe swetnes of his lufe, ne feles noght þe fyre of byrmand luf of hert. Forþi þe diversite of lufe makes þe diversite of halynes and of mede.<sup>9</sup> In heven, þe awngels þat er byrmandest in lufe er nerrest God. Also men and women þat maste<sup>10</sup> has of Goddes lufe, whether þai do penance or

15 nane, þai sall be in þe heghest degre in heven; þai þat lufes hym lesse, in þe lawer order. If þou lufe hym mykel, mykel joy and swetnes and byrnyng þou feles in his lufe, þat es þi comforth and streng[t]h nyght and day. If þi lufe be not byrmand in hym, litel es þi delyte. For hym may na man fele in joy and swetnes, bot-if<sup>11</sup> þai be clene, and fylled

20 with his lufe; and þartill<sup>12</sup> sal þou com with grete travayle in praier and thynkyng, havand swilk meditacions þat er al in þe lufe and in þe lovyng of God. And when þou ert at þi mete, love ay God in þi thoght at ilk a<sup>13</sup> morsel, and say þus in þi hert: 'Loved be þou, Keyng, and thanked be þou, Keyng, and blyssed be þou, Keyng, Jesu all my

25 joyng, of all þi giftes gude; þat for me spylt þi blude, and died on þe

1 these; cf. Cant. 2. 5

2 are

3 much, greatly

4 he desires

5 especially

6 diverse

7 keeps

8 filled with

9 reward

10 most

11 unless

12 to this condition, thereto

13 every

rude; þou gyf me grace to syng þe sang of þi lovyng.<sup>1</sup> And thynk it  
 nocht anely<sup>1</sup> whils þou etes, bot bath before and after, ay bot when<sup>2</sup>  
 þou prayes or spekes. Or if þou have other thoghtes þat þou has<sup>3</sup>  
 mare swetnes in and devocion þan in þase þat I lere<sup>4</sup> þe, þou may thynk  
 [þam]. For I hope þat God will do swilk<sup>5</sup> thoghtes in þi hert als he<sup>5</sup>  
 es payde of,<sup>6</sup> and als þou ert ordayne for. When þou prayes, loke  
 nocht how mykel þou says, bot how wele, þat þe lofe of þi hert be ay  
 upwarde, and thy thought on þat þou sayes, als mykel als þow may. If  
 þou be in prayers and meditacions al þe day, I wate<sup>7</sup> wele þat þou mon  
 wax<sup>8</sup> gretely in þe lufe of Jesu Cryste, and mikel fele of delyte, and<sup>10</sup>  
 within schort tyme.

### THE ACTIVE AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Twa lyves þar er þat Cristen men lyfes. Ane es called actyve lyfe,  
 for it es in mare<sup>9</sup> bodili warke. Another, contemplatyve lyfe, for it  
 es in mare swetnes gastely.<sup>10</sup> Actife lyfe es mykel owteward, and in  
 mare travel<sup>11</sup> and in mare peryle, for þe temptacions þat er in þe worlde.<sup>15</sup>  
 Contemplatyve lyfe es mykel inwarde, and forþi<sup>12</sup> it es lastandar,<sup>13</sup> and  
 sykerar,<sup>14</sup> restfuller, delitable, luffier, and mare medeful.<sup>16</sup> For it  
 hase joy in Goddes lufe, and savowre in þe lyf þat lastes ay, in þis  
 present tyme, if it be right ledde. And þat felyng of joy in þe lufe of  
 Jesu passes al other merites in erth. For it es swa harde to com to<sup>20</sup>  
 for þe freelte of oure flesch, and þe many temptacions þat we er um-  
 sett<sup>17</sup> with, þat lettes<sup>18</sup> us nyght and day. Al other thynges er lyght  
 at<sup>19</sup> com to, in regarde þarof, for þat may na man deserve, bot anely  
 it es gifen of Goddes godenes, til þam þat verrayli gifes þam to  
 contemplacion and til quiete for Cristes luf.<sup>25</sup>

Til men or wymen þat takes<sup>20</sup> þam til actife lyfe, twa thynges  
 falles.<sup>21</sup> Ane, for to ordayne þair meyne<sup>22</sup> in drede and in þe lufe of

<sup>1</sup> only  
<sup>2</sup> always except when  
<sup>3</sup> findest  
<sup>4</sup> teach  
<sup>5</sup> put such  
<sup>6</sup> satisfied with  
<sup>7</sup> know  
<sup>8</sup> must increase

<sup>9</sup> more  
<sup>10</sup> spiritually  
<sup>11</sup> labor, toil  
<sup>12</sup> therefore  
<sup>13</sup> more lasting  
<sup>14</sup> more full of security  
<sup>15</sup> more delightful  
<sup>16</sup> full of reward

<sup>17</sup> set about, surrounded  
<sup>18</sup> hinder  
<sup>19</sup> easy to  
<sup>20</sup> betake  
<sup>21</sup> are appointed  
<sup>22</sup> household

God, and fynd þam paire necessities, and þamself kepe enterely þe comandementes of God, doand<sup>1</sup> til þar neghbur als þai wil þat þai do til þam. Another es: þat þai do at þar power þe seven werkes of mercy, þe whilk es: to fede þe hungry; to gyf þe thristi a drynk; to  
 5 cleth þe naked; to herbar hym þat hase na howsyng; to viset þe seke; to comforth þam þat er in prysoun; and to grave<sup>2</sup> dede men. Al þat mai, and hase<sup>3</sup> cost,<sup>4</sup> þai may noght be qwyte<sup>5</sup> with ane or twa of þir, bot þam behoves do þam al, if þai wil have þe benyson<sup>6</sup> on Domesday<sup>7</sup> þat Jesu sal til<sup>8</sup> al gyf þat dose þam. Or els may þai  
 10 drede þe malysoun<sup>9</sup> þat al mon<sup>10</sup> have þat will noght do þam, when þai had godes<sup>11</sup> to do þam wyth.

Contemplatife lyf hase twa partyes,<sup>12</sup> a lower and a heer. Þe lower party es meditacion of haly wrytyng, þat es Goddes wordes, and in other gude thoghtes and swete þat men hase, of þe grace of God, abowt  
 15 þe lufe of Jesu Criste, and also in lovyng of God in psalmes and ympnes,<sup>13</sup> or in prayers. Þe hegher party of contemplacion es behaldyng and gernyng of<sup>14</sup> þe thynges of heven, and joy in þe Haly Gaste. Þat men hase oft, and<sup>15</sup> if it be swa þat þai be noght prayand with þe mowth, bot anely thynkand of God, and of þe fairehede<sup>16</sup> of aungels  
 20 and haly sawles.<sup>17</sup> Þan may I say þat contemplacion es a wonderful joy of Goddes luf, þe whilk<sup>18</sup> joy es lovyng of God, þat may noght be talde; and þat wonderful lovyng es in þe saule, and for abundance of joy and swettenes it ascendes in til þe mouth, swa þat þe hert and þe tonge acordes in ane,<sup>19</sup> and body and sawle joyes in God lyvand.<sup>20</sup>

25 A man or woman þat es ordaynd til contemplatife lyfe, first God enspires þam to forsake þis worlde, and al þe vanite and þe covayties and þe vile luste þarof. Sythen<sup>21</sup> he ledes þam by þar ane,<sup>22</sup> and spekes til þair<sup>23</sup> hert, and, als þe prophete says, he gifes þam at sowke<sup>24</sup> þe swetnes of þe begynnyng of lufe, and þan he settes þam in will<sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup> doing<sup>2</sup> bury<sup>3</sup> MS. hase and mai (em. H.)<sup>4</sup> money sufficient<sup>5</sup> quit, released<sup>6</sup> blessing<sup>7</sup> Day of Judgment<sup>8</sup> to<sup>9</sup> malediction<sup>10</sup> must<sup>11</sup> goods<sup>12</sup> parts, phases<sup>13</sup> hymns<sup>14</sup> for<sup>15</sup> even<sup>16</sup> fairness, beauty<sup>17</sup> souls<sup>18</sup> which<sup>19</sup> agree<sup>20</sup> living<sup>21</sup> afterwards<sup>22</sup> by themselves, alone<sup>23</sup> MS. ȝar<sup>24</sup> to suck<sup>25</sup> makes them desire

to gyf þam haly<sup>1</sup> to prayers and meditacions and teres. Sithen, when þai have sufferd many temptacions, and [þe]<sup>2</sup> foule noyes<sup>3</sup> of thoghtes þat er ydel, and of vanitees þe whilk wil comber þam þat can noght destroy þam, er passand away, he gars þam<sup>4</sup> geder<sup>5</sup> til þam þair hert, and fest<sup>6</sup> anely in hym, and opens til þe egh<sup>7</sup> of þair sawls<sup>8</sup> 5 þe gates of heven, swa þat þe ilk<sup>8</sup> egh lokes in til heven; and þan þe fire of lufe verrali ligges<sup>9</sup> in þair hert, and byrnes þarin, and makes [it] clene of al erthly filth; and sithen forward<sup>10</sup> þai er contemplatife men, and ravyst<sup>11</sup> in lufe. For contemplacion es a syght, and þai se in til heven with þar gastly egh. Bot þou sal witt<sup>12</sup> þat na man hase 10 perfite syght of heven whils þai er lifand bodili here; bot als sone als þai dye þai er broght before God, and sese hym face til face, and egh til egh, and wones<sup>13</sup> with hym withouten ende. For hym þai soght, and hym þai covayted, and hym þai lufed, in al þar myght.

Loo, Margarete, I have schortly sayde þe<sup>14</sup> þe forme of lyvyng, and 15 how þou may com til perfection, and to lufe hym þat þou hase taken þe til. If it do þe gude, and profit til þe, thank God, and pray for me. Þe grace of Jesu Criste be with þe, and kepe þe. Amen.

## THE ANCREN RIWLE

The *Ancren Riwe* (*Regulae Inclusarum*) was written for the guidance of three sisters of gentle blood who had given themselves up to a religious life, without having at that time become nuns. It exists in three languages—French, English, and Latin—the English having been translated from French, and the Latin from English (G. C. Macaulay, in *Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 63 ff.).

The author has been thus characterized: 'His doctrine may be summed up in a word: he teaches self-renunciation. But he does it in so kindly and affectionate a tone that the life he wishes his penitents to submit to does not seem too bitter; his voice is so sweet that the existence he describes seems almost sweet' (Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 212). His 'work betokens much learning, great knowledge of the human heart, as well as deep piety,

<sup>1</sup> wholly<sup>2</sup> em. H.<sup>3</sup> annoyances, troubles<sup>4</sup> causes them<sup>5</sup> gather, collect<sup>6</sup> fix<sup>7</sup> eyes<sup>8</sup> same<sup>9</sup> lies<sup>10</sup> from that time on<sup>11</sup> ravished, rapt<sup>12</sup> know<sup>13</sup> dwell<sup>14</sup> to thee

15. Margarete: probably Dame Margaret Kyrkby, an anchoress for whom he felt a holy affection.

and a refined and gentle spirit' (Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.* 1. 200). Ten Brink also refers (*ibid.* 2<sup>1</sup>. 16) to 'that aroma, that tinge of poetry, which breathes throughout the language of the *Ancren Riwle*,' to which, as well as to the author's deep spirituality, the work owes its unusual appeal.

Judging from its language, the *Ancren Riwle* was written in the early thirteenth century. The best text is contained in a Cambridge manuscript designated by Macaulay as B (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 145). Our selections are taken from Morton's text (*The Ancren Riwle*, London, 1853), in which MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Nero A. XIV is reproduced; the pages are 50-2, 72, 132-4, 388-90, 416-22, 422-4. The dialect is southwestern. Morton's translation is published in *The King's Classics* as *The Nun's Rule*.

### ANCHORESSES NOT TO LOOK OUT UPON THE WORLD

Vorþui,<sup>1</sup> mine leove<sup>2</sup> sustren,<sup>3</sup> þe leste þæt ge ever muwen luvieð  
our þurles<sup>4</sup>; al beon heo lutle,<sup>5</sup> þe parluris<sup>6</sup> lest<sup>7</sup> and nerewest. þe  
cloð in ham beo<sup>8</sup> twovold: blac cloð; þe creoið<sup>9</sup> hwit, wiðinnen and  
wiðuten. þe blake cloð bitockneð þæt ge beoð blake and unwurðe<sup>10</sup>  
5 toward<sup>11</sup> þe worlde wiðuten; þæt te soðe sunne, þæt is Jesu Crist,  
haveð<sup>12</sup> wiðuten vorkuled<sup>13</sup> ou; and so wiðuten, ase ge beoð, unseaul-  
liche imaked ou<sup>14</sup> þurh gleames<sup>15</sup> of his grace. þet hwite creoið  
limpeð<sup>16</sup> to ou; vor þreo manere<sup>17</sup> creoiðes beoð—reade and blake  
and hwite. þe reade limpeð to þeo þæt beoð, vor Godes luvē, mid  
10 hore<sup>18</sup> blodshedunge irudded<sup>19</sup> and ireaded,<sup>19</sup> ase þe martirs weren. þe  
blake creoið limpeð to þeo<sup>20</sup> þæt makieð i ðe<sup>21</sup> worlde hore penitence vor  
lodliche<sup>22</sup> sunnen.<sup>23</sup> þe hwite creoið limpeð to hwit meidenhod and  
to clennessē,<sup>24</sup> þæt is muchel pine<sup>25</sup> wel vor to holden.<sup>26</sup> Pine is overal<sup>27</sup>  
þurh creoið idon to understanden.<sup>28</sup> þus bitockneð hwit croið þe ward<sup>29</sup>

1 wherefore

2 dear

3 sisters

4 love your windows the  
least that ye ever may

5 and let them all be small

6 those of the parlor

7 smallest

8 let it be

9 cross

10 of no value

11 in the sight of

12 has

13 discolored

14 and so has made you exter-  
nally as you are, uncomely

15 rays

16 belongs, appertains

17 three kinds

18 their

19 reddened

20 those

21 in the

22 foul, loathsome

23 sins

24 purity

25 difficulty, pains

26 preserve

27 everywhere

28 given to understand =  
to be understood

29 keeping

1. leste . . . luvieð: properly, according to the French (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 65), 'the best that you ever can guard,' etc.



of hwit chastite, þæt is muchel pine wel vor to witene.<sup>1</sup> Þe blake  
 cloð also tekeðe<sup>2</sup> bitocnunge,<sup>3</sup> deð<sup>4</sup> lesse eile<sup>5</sup> to þen eien, and is  
 þicure aȝein þe wind, and wurse to þurhseon,<sup>6</sup> and halt<sup>7</sup> his heou<sup>8</sup>  
 betere vor winde and for oðer hwat.<sup>9</sup> Lokeð þæt te<sup>10</sup> parlurs beon  
 ever veste<sup>11</sup> on everiche halve,<sup>12</sup> and eke wel istekene<sup>13</sup>; and witeð<sup>14</sup> þer  
 our<sup>15</sup> eien, leste þe heorte etfleo<sup>16</sup> and wende ut, ase of David,<sup>17</sup> and  
 oure soule secli<sup>18</sup> so sone heo is ute. Ich write muchel vor oðre, þæt  
 noðing ne etrineð ou,<sup>19</sup> mine leove sustren, vor nabbe ȝe<sup>20</sup> nout þene  
 nome,<sup>21</sup> ne ne schulen habben, þurh þe grace of Gode, of totinde<sup>22</sup>  
 ancren,<sup>23</sup> ne of tollinde lokunges<sup>24</sup> ne lates,<sup>25</sup> þæt summe, oðer hwules,<sup>26</sup>  
 weilawei! unkundeliche<sup>27</sup> makieð; vor aȝein kunde<sup>28</sup> hit is, and un-  
 með<sup>29</sup> sullic<sup>30</sup> wunder, þæt te deade totie,<sup>31</sup> and mid cwike worldes  
 men<sup>32</sup> wede,<sup>33</sup> wið sunne.

‘Me<sup>34</sup> leove sire,’ seið sum inouh reaðe,<sup>35</sup> ‘and is hit nu so overuvel<sup>36</sup>  
 vor te<sup>37</sup> toten utward?’ Ȝe hit, leove suster, vor uvel þæt ter<sup>38</sup> kumeð  
 of hit, is uvel over uvel<sup>39</sup> to everich ancre, and nomeliche<sup>40</sup> to þe ȝunge,  
 and to þen old vorðui<sup>41</sup> þæt heo to þe ȝunge ȝiveð uvel vorbisne,<sup>42</sup> and  
 scheld<sup>43</sup> to werien ham mide.<sup>44</sup> Vor, ȝif ei<sup>45</sup> etwit<sup>46</sup> ham, þeonne sig-  
 geð heo anon riht<sup>47</sup>. ‘Me sire, þeo deð also þeo<sup>48</sup> is betere þen Ich  
 am, and wot betere þen Ich wot hwat heo haveð to donne.’ O leove  
 ȝunge ancren, ofte a ful hawur<sup>49</sup> smið smeoðið<sup>50</sup> a ful woc<sup>51</sup> knif, and  
 te wise ouh<sup>52</sup> to volewen wisdom, and nout folie, and an olde ancre  
 mei don wel þæt tu<sup>53</sup> dest uvele. Auh<sup>54</sup> toten ut wiðuten uvel ne mei

1 guard  
 2 teaches  
 3 symbol, emblem  
 4 does  
 5 ill  
 6 see through  
 7 holds, keeps  
 8 hue, color  
 9 anything else  
 10 the  
 11 fast  
 12 side  
 13 shut  
 14 guard  
 15 your  
 16 fly out, escape  
 17 like David's  
 18 become sick

19 for nothing [of this] applies to you  
 20 ye have not  
 21 the name  
 22 peering  
 23 anchoresses  
 24 enticing looks  
 25 manners, gestures  
 26 at times  
 27 inconsistently  
 28 against nature  
 29 exceedingly  
 30 strange; MS. swuc  
 31 should look out  
 32 living men of the world  
 33 wed  
 34 my  
 35 quickly enough  
 36 very evil

37 to  
 38 there  
 39 evil beyond evil  
 40 especially  
 41 because  
 42 example  
 43 a shield  
 44 defend themselves with  
 45 any one  
 46 reprove, chide  
 47 straightway  
 48 she does it also who  
 49 clever, skilful  
 50 forges  
 51 weak, poor  
 52 ought  
 53 thou  
 54 but

nouðer of ou ; and nim nu ȝeme<sup>1</sup> hwat uvel beo icumen of totinge :  
 nout on uvel ne two, auh al þe uvel and al þe wo þæt nu is, and ever  
 ȝete was, and ever schal iwurðen<sup>2</sup>—al com of a sihðe. Þæt hit beo soð,  
 lo her þe preove<sup>3</sup> : Lucifer, þurh þæt he iseih and biheold on himsulf  
 5 his owene veirness, leap<sup>4</sup> into prude,<sup>5</sup> and bicom of<sup>6</sup> engel atelich<sup>7</sup>  
 deovel ; and of Eve, ure alre<sup>8</sup> moder, is iwruten on alre erest,<sup>9</sup> in hire  
 neowe<sup>10</sup> inȝong<sup>11</sup> of hire eiesihðe : *Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum*  
*esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile, et*  
*tulit de fructu ejus et comedit, deditque viro,*<sup>12</sup> þæt is : ' Eve biheold o<sup>13</sup>  
 10 þen vorbodene eppel, and iseih hine<sup>14</sup> veir, and veng<sup>15</sup> to deliten i þe  
 biholdunge, and turnde hire lust þer toward, and nom<sup>16</sup> and et þerof,  
 and ȝef hire loverd.' Lo hu Holi Writ spekeð, and hu inwardliche<sup>17</sup>  
 hit telleð hu sunegunge<sup>18</sup> bigon. Þus eode<sup>19</sup> sihðe bivoren, and makede  
 wei to<sup>20</sup> uvel lust ; and com þe deað þerefter, þæt al monkun iveleð.<sup>21</sup>  
 15 þes eppel, leove sustren, bitocneð alle þe þing þæt lust falleð<sup>22</sup> to, and  
 delit of sunne. Hwon þu biholdest te mon, þu ert in Eve point<sup>23</sup> :  
 þu lokest o þen eppel.

## THE BEAUTY OF SILENCE

Seneca seide : *Ad summam [volo] vos esse rariloquos, tuncque pauci-*  
*loquos.*<sup>24</sup> Þæt is þe ende of þe tale, seið Seneke the wise : ' Ichulle<sup>25</sup>  
 20 þæt ȝe speken selde, and þeonne buten lutel.' Auh moni punt<sup>26</sup> hire  
 word vor te leten mo ut, as me deð water et ter mulne cluse<sup>27</sup> ; and  
 so duden Jobes freond<sup>28</sup> þæt weren icumen to vrovren<sup>29</sup> him : seten<sup>30</sup>  
 stille alle seoveniht.<sup>31</sup> Auh þeo<sup>32</sup> [heo] hefden alles bigunne vor to  
 spekene, þeone kuðen heo nevere astunten<sup>33</sup> hore cleppe.<sup>34</sup> Greg. :

<sup>1</sup> take thou heed<sup>2</sup> come to pass<sup>3</sup> proof<sup>4</sup> leaped<sup>5</sup> pride<sup>6</sup> instead of<sup>7</sup> hateful, foul<sup>8</sup> of us all<sup>9</sup> first of all<sup>10</sup> fresh<sup>11</sup> beginning<sup>12</sup> Gen. 3.6<sup>13</sup> looked upon<sup>14</sup> it<sup>15</sup> began<sup>16</sup> took<sup>17</sup> showing the inward causes<sup>18</sup> sinning<sup>19</sup> went<sup>20</sup> for<sup>21</sup> feeleth<sup>22</sup> inclines<sup>23</sup> in Eve's case<sup>24</sup> Not found<sup>25</sup> I will, desire<sup>26</sup> shut in, restrain<sup>27</sup> at the mill-dam<sup>28</sup> friends<sup>29</sup> comfort<sup>30</sup> they sat<sup>31</sup> for a full week<sup>32</sup> when<sup>33</sup> they never knew how  
to stop<sup>34</sup> talking

*Censura silentii nutritura est verbi*; so hit is ine monie, ase Seint Gregorie seið: ' Silence is wordes fostrild.<sup>1</sup> ' *Juge silentium cogit celestia meditari*: ' Long silence, and wel iwust,<sup>2</sup> nedeð<sup>3</sup> þe þouhtes up touward þer heovene.' Also ase ge muwen iseon þe water, hwon me punt hit, and stoppeð<sup>4</sup> bivoren wel,<sup>5</sup> so þet hit ne muwe.<sup>6</sup> aduneward, þeonne 5 is hit ined<sup>7</sup> agein vor to climben upward. And ge al þisses weis<sup>8</sup> pundeð<sup>9</sup> ower wordes, and forstoppeð<sup>10</sup> ouwer þouhtes, ase ge wulleð þæt heo climben and hien touward heovene, and nout ne vallen aduneward, and to vleoten<sup>11</sup> geond<sup>12</sup> te world, ase deð muchel cheafle.<sup>13</sup> Auh hwon ge nede moten<sup>14</sup> speken a lutewiht,<sup>15</sup> leseð up<sup>16</sup> ower muðes 10 flodgeten,<sup>17</sup> ase me deð et ter<sup>18</sup> mulne, and leted<sup>19</sup> adun sone.

#### THE HAPPINESS OF ANCHORESSES IS LIKE THAT OF THE BIRDS OF HEAVEN

Auh God cleopeð<sup>20</sup> þe gode ancren briddes of heovene, ase Ich er<sup>21</sup> seiðe: *Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres celi nidos*<sup>22</sup>: ' Voxes habbeð hore holes, and briddes of heovene hore nestes.' Treowe ancren beoð ariht<sup>23</sup> briddes of heovene þet fleoð an heih, ant sitteð singinde 15 murie<sup>24</sup> o ðe<sup>25</sup> grene bowes; þet is, þencheð<sup>26</sup> upp, and of þe blisse of heovene, þet never ne valeweð,<sup>27</sup> auh is ever grene, and sitteð o pisse grene, singinde swuðe<sup>28</sup> murie; þet is, resteð ham inne swuche þouhte, and habbeð muruhðe of heorte, ase þeo þet singeð. Brid þauh,<sup>29</sup> oðer hwule,<sup>30</sup> vor te sechen<sup>31</sup> his mete<sup>32</sup> vor þe vlesches neode, lihteð adun 20 to þer eorðe; auh þeo hwule þet<sup>33</sup> hit sit o þer eorðe, nis hit never siker, auh biwent<sup>34</sup> him ofte, and bilokeð<sup>35</sup> him ever georneliche<sup>36</sup> al abuten. Alriht<sup>37</sup> so, þe gode ancre, ne vleo heo<sup>38</sup> never so heie, heo

1 foster-mother, nurse  
2 kept  
3 compels  
4 stop, check (it)  
5 spring  
6 cannot (flow)  
7 forced, compelled  
8 in this way  
9 do ye check (imperative)  
10 restrain  
11 float  
12 through  
13 idle talk

14 needs must  
15 little  
16 open up  
17 the floodgates of your mouth  
18 at the  
19 let them  
20 callest  
21 before  
22 Matt. 8. 20  
23 indeed  
24 merrily  
25 on the  
26 meditate

27 fadeth  
28 very  
29 a bird, however  
30 sometimes  
31 seek  
32 food  
33 the while that, while  
34 turns  
35 looks  
36 carefully, cautiously  
37 just  
38 although she fly

mot lihten oðer hwules adun to þer eorðe of hire bodie, eten, drinken, slepen, wurchen, speken, iheren (of þet neodeð to),<sup>1</sup> of eorðliche þinges. Auh þeonne, as þe brid deð, heo mot wel biseon hire,<sup>2</sup> and biholden hire on ilchere half,<sup>3</sup> þet heo nouhwar ne misnime,<sup>4</sup> leste  
 5 heo beo ikeiht<sup>5</sup> þuruh summe of þe deofles gronen,<sup>6</sup> oðer ihurt summes weis, þe hwule þæt heo sit so lowe.

## THE KINGLY WOOER

A lefdi was<sup>7</sup> þet was mid hire voan<sup>8</sup> biset al abuten, and hire lond al destrued, and heo al poure, wiðinnen one eorðene castle. On<sup>9</sup> mihti kinges lue was, þauh,<sup>10</sup> biturnd upon hire, so unimete<sup>11</sup> swuðe  
 10 þet he vor wouhleccunge<sup>12</sup> sende hire his sonden,<sup>13</sup> on efter oðer, and ofte somed monie,<sup>14</sup> and sende hire beaubelet<sup>15</sup> boðe veole<sup>16</sup> and feire, and sukurs<sup>17</sup> of livened,<sup>18</sup> and help of his heie hird<sup>19</sup> to holden hire castel. Heo underveng<sup>20</sup> al ase on unrecheleas þing,<sup>21</sup> þet was so herd iheorted þet hire lue ne mihte he never beon þe neorre. Hwat  
 15 wult tu more? He com himsulf a<sup>22</sup> last, and scheawede hire his feire neb,<sup>23</sup> ase þe<sup>24</sup> þet was of alle men veirest to biholden, and spec<sup>25</sup> swuðe sweteliche and so murie wordes þet heo<sup>26</sup> muhten þe deade arearen<sup>27</sup> vrom deaðe to<sup>28</sup> live, and wrouhte veole wundres, and dude veole meistris<sup>28</sup> bivoren hire eihsihðe, and scheawede hire his mihten;  
 20 tolde hire of his kinedome, and bead<sup>29</sup> for to makien hire cwene of al þet he ouhte.<sup>30</sup> Al þis ne help nout. Nes<sup>31</sup> þis wunderlich hoker<sup>32</sup>? Vor heo nes never wurðe vor te beon his schelchine.<sup>33</sup> Auh so, þuruh his debonerté,<sup>34</sup> lue hefde overkumen hine þet he seide on ende<sup>35</sup>:  
 ' Dame, þu ert iweorred,<sup>36</sup> and pine von<sup>37</sup> beoð so stronge þet tu ne

1 so far as is necessary

2 look about her

3 on every side

4 make a mistake

5 caught

6 snares

7 there was

8 foes

9 a

10 however

11 boundlessly

12 for wooing, to woo her

13 messengers

14 many together

15 jewels (baubles)

16 many

17 help, aid

18 food

19 army

20 received

21 a heedless creature

22 at

23 face, countenance

24 he

25 spoke

26 they

27 arouse

28 brave deeds

29 offered

30 owned, possessed

31 is not

32 contempt, disdain

33 slave, scullion

34 graciousness, kindness

35 finally

36 attacked, warred against

37 foes

meiht nones weis,<sup>1</sup> wiðuten sukurs of me, etfleon<sup>2</sup> hore honden, þet heo ne don þe to scheomefule deað. Ich chulle,<sup>3</sup> vor þe luve of þe, nimen þis fiht upon me, and aredden<sup>4</sup> þe of ham þet secheð<sup>5</sup> þine deað. Ich wot, þauh, forsoðe, þet Ich schal bitweonen<sup>6</sup> ham under- vongen<sup>7</sup> deaðes wunde, and Ich hit wulle heorteliche vor to ofgon<sup>8</sup> 5 þine heorte. Nu, þeonne, biseche Ich þe, vor þe luve þet Ich kuðe þe,<sup>9</sup> þet tu luvie me, hure and hure<sup>10</sup> efter þen ilke deaðe,<sup>11</sup> hwon þu noldes lives.<sup>12</sup> Þes king dude al þus — aredde hire of alle hire von, and was himself to wundre<sup>13</sup> ituked,<sup>14</sup> and isleien on ende.<sup>15</sup> Þuruh miracle, þauh, he aros from deaðe to live. Nere<sup>16</sup> þeos ilke lefdi of 10 uvele kunnes kunde,<sup>17</sup> gif heo over alle þing<sup>18</sup> ne luve him herefter?

Þes king is Jesu Crist, Godes Sune, þet al o þisse wise<sup>19</sup> wowude<sup>20</sup> ure soule, þet þe deoffen heveden biset. And he, ase noble woware, efter monie messagers and feole<sup>21</sup> god deden, com vor to preoven his luve, and scheawede þuruh knihtschipe<sup>22</sup> þet he was luve-wurðe,<sup>23</sup> ase 15 weren sumewhule<sup>24</sup> knihtes iwuned<sup>25</sup> for to donne. He dude him ine<sup>26</sup> turnement, and hefde, vor his leofmonnes<sup>27</sup> luve, his schelde ine vihte,<sup>28</sup> ase kene kniht, on everiche half ipurled.<sup>29</sup>

## THE ANCHORESS' CAT, HER CLOTHING AND OCCUPATIONS

Ʒe, mine leove sustren, ne schulen habben no best<sup>30</sup> bute kat one.<sup>31</sup> Ancre þet haveð eihte<sup>32</sup> puncheð<sup>33</sup> bet<sup>34</sup> husewif, ase Marthe was, þen 20 ancre; ne none wise ne mei heo beon Marie,<sup>35</sup> mid griðfulnesse<sup>36</sup> of heorte. Vor þeonne mot<sup>37</sup> heo þenchen of þe kues<sup>38</sup> foddre, and of

<sup>1</sup> in no way<sup>2</sup> escape from<sup>3</sup> will<sup>4</sup> deliver<sup>5</sup> seek; MS. schecheð<sup>6</sup> amongst<sup>7</sup> receive<sup>8</sup> deserve, win<sup>9</sup> show thee<sup>10</sup> at least<sup>11</sup> MS. dead deaðe<sup>12</sup> in life<sup>13</sup> wonderfully, grievously<sup>14</sup> maltreated, injured<sup>15</sup> finally<sup>16</sup> were not<sup>17</sup> of a perverse sort of nature<sup>18</sup> above all things<sup>19</sup> in this manner<sup>20</sup> wooed<sup>21</sup> many<sup>22</sup> knightly prowess<sup>23</sup> worthy of love; MS. -wurde<sup>24</sup> sometimes<sup>25</sup> wont<sup>26</sup> entered into<sup>27</sup> sweetheart, lady<sup>28</sup> in the fight<sup>29</sup> pierced in all parts<sup>30</sup> beast, animal<sup>31</sup> except only a cat<sup>32</sup> cattle<sup>33</sup> seems<sup>34</sup> better<sup>35</sup> Mary<sup>36</sup> peace<sup>37</sup> must<sup>38</sup> cow's

heordemonne huires,<sup>1</sup> oluhnen<sup>2</sup> þene heiward,<sup>3</sup> warien<sup>4</sup> hwon me punt hire,<sup>5</sup> and gælden, þauh, þe hermes.<sup>6</sup> Wat Crist,<sup>7</sup> þis is lodlich þing hwon me makeð mone<sup>8</sup> in tune of ancre eihte. Þauh, gif eni mot nede habben ku, loke þet heo none monne ne eilie,<sup>9</sup> ne ne hermie,<sup>10</sup> 5 ne þet hire þouht ne beo nout þeron ivestned.<sup>11</sup> Ancre ne ouh<sup>12</sup> nout to habben no þing þet drawe utward hire heorte. None cheffare<sup>13</sup> ne drive<sup>14</sup> ge. Ancre þet is cheapild,<sup>15</sup> heo cheapeð<sup>16</sup> hire soule þe chepmon<sup>17</sup> of helle. Ne wite<sup>18</sup> ge nout in oure<sup>19</sup> huse of oðer monnes þinges, ne eihte, ne cloðes; ne nout ne undervo<sup>20</sup> ge þe chirche vesti- 10 menz, ne þene caliz,<sup>21</sup> bute-gif<sup>22</sup> strençðe hit makie,<sup>23</sup> oðer muchel eie,<sup>24</sup> vor of swuche witunge<sup>25</sup> is ikumen muchel uvel oftetiðen.<sup>26</sup> Wiðinnen ower woanes<sup>27</sup> ne lete ge nenne mon slepen. Gif muchel neode mid alle<sup>28</sup> makeð breken<sup>29</sup> ower hus, þe hwule þet hit ever is ibroken, loke þet ge habben þerinne mid ou one wummon of clene live deies and 15 nihtes.<sup>30</sup>

Vorði<sup>31</sup> þet no mon ne isihð ou, ne ge iseoð nenne mon, wel mei don of<sup>32</sup> ower cloðes, beon heo hwite, beon heo blake; bute þet heo beon unorne<sup>33</sup> and warme, and wel iwrouhte — velles<sup>34</sup> wel itauwed,<sup>35</sup> and habbeð ase monie ase ou toneodeð,<sup>36</sup> to bedde and eke to rugge.<sup>37</sup> 20 Nexst fleshe ne schal mon wrien no linene cloð, bute-gif hit beo of herde<sup>38</sup> and of greate heorden.<sup>39</sup> Stamin<sup>40</sup> habbe hwose wule, and hwose wule mei beon buten.<sup>41</sup> Ge schulen liggen in on heater,<sup>42</sup> and igurd.<sup>43</sup> Ne bere<sup>44</sup> ge non iren,<sup>45</sup> ne here,<sup>46</sup> ne irspiles<sup>47</sup> felles; ne ne

<sup>1</sup> herdsman's hire<sup>2</sup> flatter<sup>3</sup> hayward (keeper of the hedges, who prevented cattle from injuring private property)<sup>4</sup> defend herself<sup>5</sup> they shut it up<sup>6</sup> pay the damages, moreover<sup>7</sup> Christ knows<sup>8</sup> they make complaint<sup>9</sup> annoy<sup>10</sup> harm<sup>11</sup> fixed<sup>12</sup> ought<sup>13</sup> traffic, business<sup>14</sup> carry on<sup>15</sup> trafficker<sup>16</sup> sells<sup>17</sup> to the bargainer<sup>18</sup> take charge<sup>19</sup> your<sup>20</sup> receive<sup>21</sup> chalice<sup>22</sup> unless<sup>23</sup> make necessary<sup>24</sup> fear<sup>25</sup> guarding, care-taking<sup>26</sup> oftentimes<sup>27</sup> dwelling<sup>28</sup> after all<sup>29</sup> to be used<sup>30</sup> by day and night<sup>31</sup> because<sup>32</sup> do with, be content with<sup>33</sup> plain<sup>34</sup> skins<sup>35</sup> tawed, dressed<sup>36</sup> you need<sup>37</sup> also for your back<sup>38</sup> hards, tow<sup>39</sup> coarse canvas<sup>40</sup> harsh rough cloth, used for penitential shirts (cf. F. *étamine*)<sup>41</sup> without<sup>42</sup> a garment<sup>43</sup> girt<sup>44</sup> wear<sup>45</sup> iron<sup>46</sup> haircloth<sup>47</sup> porcupines'

beate ou þermide,<sup>1</sup> ne mid schurge<sup>2</sup> ileðered<sup>3</sup> ne ileaded,<sup>4</sup> ne mid holie,<sup>5</sup> ne mid breres<sup>6</sup>; ne ne biblodge hiresulf<sup>7</sup> wiðuten schriftes<sup>8</sup> leave; ne ne nime, et enes, to veole<sup>9</sup> disciplines.<sup>10</sup> Ower schone beon<sup>11</sup> greate and warme. Ine sumer ȝe habbeð leave vor to gon and sitten barvot, and<sup>12</sup> hosen wiðuten vaumpez,<sup>13</sup> and ligge ine ham<sup>14</sup> hwoſo likeð.<sup>15</sup> . . . Ȝif ȝe muwen beon wimpelleas,<sup>16</sup> beoð bi<sup>17</sup> warme keppen<sup>18</sup> and þeruppon blake veiles. Hwoſe wule beon iseien, þauh heo atiffe<sup>19</sup> hire nis nout muchel wunder; auh to Godes eien heo is lufsumere, þet is, vor þe lufe of him, untiffed wiðuten. Ring ne broche nabbe ȝe, ne gurdel imenbred,<sup>20</sup> ne gloven, ne no swuch þing þet ou<sup>21</sup> ne deið<sup>22</sup> for to habben.

Ever me is leovere so<sup>23</sup>, ȝe don grettur werkes. Ne makie none purses, vor te vreonden ou mide,<sup>24</sup> ne blodbendes<sup>25</sup> of seolke, auh schepieð,<sup>26</sup> and seuweð,<sup>27</sup> and amendeð<sup>28</sup> chirche cloðes, and poure monne cloðes. No þing ne schule ȝe ȝiven wiðuten schriftes leave.<sup>29</sup> 15 Helpeð mid ower owune swinke,<sup>30</sup> so vorð so<sup>31</sup> ȝe muwen, to schruden<sup>32</sup> ou sulven and þeo þet ou<sup>33</sup> serveð, ase Seint Jerome lereð.<sup>34</sup>

## THE ANCHORESS' HEALTH

Ȝe ne schulen senden lettres, ne undervon lettres, ne writen uten leave. Ȝe schulen beon idodded<sup>35</sup> four siðen i ðe ȝere, vor to lihten ower heaved<sup>36</sup>; and ase ofte ileten blod,<sup>37</sup> and oftere ȝif neod is; and<sup>38</sup> hwoſo mei beon þer wiðuten,<sup>39</sup> Ich hit mei wel iðolien.<sup>40</sup> Hwon ȝe beoð ileten blod, ȝe ne schulen don no þing, þeo þreo dawes, þet ou greve,<sup>41</sup> auh talkeð mid ouer meidenes and mid þeafule<sup>42</sup> talen schurteð<sup>43</sup> ou

<sup>1</sup> therewith<sup>2</sup> scourge<sup>3</sup> made of leather<sup>4</sup> leaded<sup>5</sup> holly<sup>6</sup> briars<sup>7</sup> let her not cause herself to bleed<sup>8</sup> of the confessor<sup>9</sup> too many<sup>10</sup> flagellations<sup>11</sup> let your shoes be<sup>12</sup> and (to wear)<sup>13</sup> vamps<sup>14</sup> whoever likes may lie in them<sup>15</sup> without wimples<sup>16</sup> be provided with<sup>17</sup> capes<sup>18</sup> adorn<sup>19</sup> linked<sup>20</sup> you ought not<sup>21</sup> I am always more pleased if<sup>22</sup> gain you friends with<sup>23</sup> bandages to stop bleeding<sup>24</sup> fashion<sup>25</sup> sew<sup>26</sup> mend<sup>27</sup> labor<sup>28</sup> so far as<sup>29</sup> clothe<sup>30</sup> teacheth<sup>31</sup> have your hair clipped<sup>32</sup> your head<sup>33</sup> have blood let<sup>34</sup> be able to be without this<sup>35</sup> suffer, permit<sup>36</sup> that may grieve you, be disagreeable to you<sup>37</sup> edifying<sup>38</sup> divert

togederes. *Ze* muwen don so ofte hwon ou puncheð hevie,<sup>1</sup> oðer beoð vor sume worldliche þinge sorie oðer seke. So wisliche witeð ou<sup>2</sup> in our<sup>3</sup> blodletunge, and holdeð ou ine swuche reste þet *ze* longe þer-  
 5 *ze* iveleð eni secnesse; vor muchel sotschipe<sup>5</sup> hit is vor to vorleosen,<sup>6</sup> vor one deie, tene oðer twelve.

## A TREATISE AGAINST MIRACLE-PLAYS

*Cen.* This tract, in the form of a sermon, was first printed by Halliwell (in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 2. 42 ff.) from a manuscript volume of sermons in the library of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. This is now British Museum MS. Add. 24,202, which is designated in the catalogue as 'Wycliffite Tracts in English.' The manuscript is described as a small folio, vellum, of the end of the fourteenth century. Unless otherwise stated, the readings given below repose upon my collation of this manuscript. As there is considerable variation in the orthography, I have sought to render it more consistent, especially in the endings. Emendations marked 'M' are those of Mätzner in his *Altenglische Sprachproben*; the others are mine.

The following selections give the main argument of the tract, which is headed: 'Here bigynnis a tretise of miraculis-pleyinge.' The outline which follows may help to make the argument clear. Detailed notes can be found in Mätzner's edition.

- I. Introduction. Christ's miracles were performed in earnest, and therefore ought not to be represented in play.
  1. Such representation takes away our fear of God, and, as a result, the strength of our faith.
  2. It contradicts the teaching of Christ.
  3. It leads to scorn of God: the players make sport of his passion.
- II. There are six arguments in favor of miracle-plays. Men say:
  1. They are given for the sake of worship.
  2. By them many are converted to a good life, seeing, as they do, the manifest work of the devil.
  3. Often the sight of Christ's passion moves men to tears.
  4. Some men may be drawn to religion through play, who would never be moved by seriousness.
  5. Men must have some recreation; why not that of a good sort?
  6. We do not object to paintings of miracles; why, then, to dramatic portrayals of them?
- III. But there are answers to all these arguments:
  1. The giving of such plays springs from heathenism, and is not worship. Worship consists in doing the will of God.

<sup>1</sup> you are in low spirits

<sup>2</sup> guard yourselves

<sup>3</sup> your

<sup>4</sup> more vigorously

<sup>5</sup> folly

<sup>6</sup> lose



2. Though good may sometimes come of evil, this is not the rule. Miracle-plays most often pervert those who see them.
3. If the spectators weep, it is purely from external causes, not from consciousness of their own sin.
4. If men are ever converted by miracle-plays, it is only to show the grace of God. But men are seldom converted by such means; conversion comes from the earnest working of God, not from playing.
5. Plays do not afford true recreation.
6. Good paintings merely exhibit truth, but plays are mainly to delight men's bodily senses.

## IV. A friend declares :

1. That he will not abandon his interest in miracle-plays unless their sinfulness can be proved directly from Holy Writ.

Answer: Such plays are against the spirit of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' (Illustration: One would not represent in a play the death of one's own father.)

2. That if the giving of such plays is sin, it is but a small sin.

Answer: Any sin, however small, is deadly sin.

Moreover, the danger in such playing is shown by the analogy of the following stories, with their mediæval allegorical interpretations:

- a. Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 21. 8-10).
- b. The children of Abner and those of Joab (2 Sam. 2. 12-32).
- c. Moses and the children of Israel (Exod. 32).
- d. Elisha (2 Kings 2. 23-4).
- e. Noah (as referred to in Matt. 24. 38-9).

- V. If we are to play, let us do so in the spirit of David (2 Sam. 6. 15-6, 20-2), (1) realizing how God's grace to us surpasses that to our neighbors; (2) being always devout before God, though disliked by the world; (3) being lowly in our own eyes.

Knowe gee, Cristen men, þat as Crist, God and man, is boþe weye, trewþ, and lif,<sup>1</sup> as seiþ þe gospel of Jon (weye to þe erryng, trewþe to þe unknowyng and doutyng, lif to þe styng<sup>2</sup> to hevene and weyinge<sup>3</sup>), so Crist dyde<sup>4</sup> noþinge to us but ef[f]ectuely in weye of mercy, in treuþe of ri[3]twesnes, and in lif of gildyng<sup>5</sup> everlastyng<sup>5</sup> joye for oure continuely<sup>6</sup> mo[u]nyng and sorwyng in þis valey of teeres.<sup>7</sup> Þe<sup>8</sup> myraclis, þerfore, þat Crist dyde<sup>4</sup> heere in erþe, ouþer in<sup>9</sup> hymself ouþer in hise seyntis, weren so ef[f]ectuel and in earnest don,<sup>10</sup> þat to synful men þat erren þei brougten forgyvenesse of synne, settinge hem in þe weye of rigt bileve; to doutouse<sup>11</sup> men not stede- 10 fast þei brougten in kunnyng<sup>12</sup> to betere plesen God, and verry hope

<sup>1</sup> John 14. 6

<sup>2</sup> those climbing upward

<sup>3</sup> growing weary

<sup>4</sup> MS. dude

<sup>5</sup> yielding

<sup>6</sup> MS. continuely

<sup>7</sup> Ps. 84. 6 (in the Latin)

<sup>8</sup> MS. in (em. M.)

<sup>9</sup> through

<sup>10</sup> MS. done

<sup>11</sup> doubting

<sup>12</sup> ability

in God to ben<sup>1</sup> stedefast in hym; and to þe wery of þe weye of God, for þe grette penaunce and suffraunce of þe trybulac[i]oun þat men moten<sup>2</sup> han<sup>3</sup> þerinne, þei brougten in love of brynnynge<sup>4</sup> charite, to þe whiche alle þing is ligȝt,<sup>5</sup> and<sup>6</sup> were<sup>7</sup> he to suffren<sup>8</sup> depe, þe whiche men most dreden, for þe everlastynge lyf and joye þat men most loven and desiren<sup>9</sup>: of þe whiche þing verry hope puttȝ away alle werinesse heere in þe weye of God. Þanne, syþen<sup>10</sup> myraclis of Crist and of hyse seyntis weren þus effectuel, as by oure bileve we ben in certeyn,<sup>11</sup> no man shulde usen in bourde<sup>12</sup> and  
 10 pley<sup>13</sup> þe myraclis and werkis þat Crist so earnestfully<sup>14</sup> wrougte to oure helpe<sup>15</sup>; for whoevere so do[i]þ, he erriþ in þe byleve, reversiþ<sup>16</sup> Crist, and scorniþ<sup>17</sup> God. He erriþ in þe bileve, for in þat he takȝ þe most precious werkis of God in pley and bourde, he<sup>18</sup> takȝ his name in idil,<sup>19</sup> and so mysusiþ oure byleve. A, Lord! syþen an erþely servaunt  
 15 dar not taken<sup>20</sup> in pley and in bourde þat þat his<sup>21</sup> erþely lord takȝ in earnest, myche more we shulden not maken oure pley<sup>18</sup> and bourde of þo myraclis and werkis þat God so earnestfully wrougt[e] to us; for,<sup>22</sup> soþely whan we so don,<sup>23</sup> drede to synne<sup>24</sup> is taken<sup>20</sup> away, as a servaunt whan he bourdiþ<sup>25</sup> wiþ his mayster leesȝ<sup>26</sup> his drede to  
 20 offenden<sup>27</sup> hym, namely, whanne he bourdiþ wiþ his mayster in þat þat<sup>28</sup> his mayster takȝ in earnest. . . .

Þanne, syþen þes myraclis-pleyeris taken in bourde þe earnestful werkis of God, no doute þat þei ne<sup>29</sup> scornen God, as dyden<sup>30</sup> þe Jewis þat bobbiden<sup>31</sup> Crist; for þei lowen<sup>32</sup> at his passioun, as þese lawgen<sup>33</sup>  
 25 and japen at<sup>34</sup> þe myraclis of God. Þerfore, as þei scorniden<sup>35</sup> Crist, so þese<sup>36</sup> scorne[n] God; and rigȝt<sup>37</sup> as Pharao, wroop<sup>38</sup> to do[n] þat

<sup>1</sup> MS. been<sup>2</sup> must needs<sup>3</sup> MS. have<sup>4</sup> burning<sup>5</sup> easy<sup>6</sup> if<sup>7</sup> MS. omits were; M. he were<sup>8</sup> MS. suffere<sup>9</sup> MS. di-<sup>10</sup> since<sup>11</sup> assured<sup>12</sup> game, sport<sup>13</sup> MS. pleye<sup>14</sup> MS. ernyst-<sup>15</sup> salvation<sup>16</sup> contradicts<sup>17</sup> MS. -yþ<sup>18</sup> MS. and so<sup>19</sup> vain<sup>20</sup> MS. -un<sup>21</sup> MS. her (em. M.)<sup>22</sup> MS. ffor<sup>23</sup> MS. done<sup>24</sup> of sinning<sup>25</sup> jests, makes merry<sup>26</sup> loses<sup>27</sup> MS. -yn<sup>28</sup> MS. in þat in þat<sup>29</sup> MS. ne þei<sup>30</sup> MS. diden<sup>31</sup> mocked, made sport of<sup>32</sup> laughed<sup>33</sup> MS. lowyn<sup>34</sup> MS. of<sup>35</sup> MS. -eden<sup>36</sup> MS. þeese<sup>37</sup> just<sup>38</sup> hating

þat God bad hym, dispiside God,<sup>1</sup> so þese myraclis-pleyeris and  
 -mayntenours,<sup>2</sup> leevynge plesingly<sup>3</sup> to do[n] þat God biddiþ hem,  
 scornen God. He, forsoþe, haþ beden us alle to halowen<sup>4</sup> his name,  
 gyvyng drede and reverence in alle mynde<sup>5</sup> of his werkis, wiþoute  
 ony pleying[e] or japyng, as al holynesse is in ful earnest men; þanne,  
 pleyinge þe name of Goddis myraclis,<sup>6</sup> as plesyngly þei leeve[n] to do[n]  
 þat God biddiþ hem, so þei scornen his name, and so scornen<sup>7</sup> hym.

But hereagenus<sup>8</sup> þei seyen [1] þat þei pleyen þese myraclis in þe  
 worship of God, and so dyden not þese Jewis þat bobben Crist.  
 Also, [2] ofte siþis<sup>9</sup> by siche myraclis-pleyinge ben<sup>10</sup> men convertid  
 to gode lyvyng, as men and wymmen, seyng in myraclis-pleyinge  
 þat þe devul by þer aray, by þe whiche þei moven eche on opere<sup>11</sup> to  
 leccherie and to pride, makith hem his servauntis to bryngen hemsilf  
 and many opere to helle, and to han<sup>12</sup> fer more vylenye hereafter, by<sup>13</sup>  
 þer proude aray heere, þan þei han worschipe heere; and seyng,<sup>14</sup>  
 ferþermore, þat al þis worldly beyng heere is but vanite for a while —  
 as is myraclis-pleying[e] — þei<sup>15</sup> leeven þer pride, and taken to hem  
 afterward þe meke conversac[i]oun of Crist and of hise seyntis, and  
 so myraclis-pleyinge turniþ<sup>16</sup> men to þe bileve, and not pervertiþ.<sup>17</sup>  
 Also, [3] ofte syþis by siche myraclis-pleyinge men and wymmen,  
 seyng þe passioun of Crist and of hise seyntis, ben movyd to com-  
 passion and devocion, wepyng bitere teris; þanne þei ben not scorn-  
 yng of God, but worschipyng. Also, [4] profitable<sup>18</sup> to men and to  
 þe worschipe of God it is to fulfillen<sup>19</sup> and sechen alle þe menes by  
 þe whiche men mowen<sup>20</sup> fleen<sup>21</sup> synne, and drawn hem to vertues.  
 And syþen as<sup>22</sup> þer ben men þat on[e]ly by earnestful doynge wylen  
 be[n] convertid to God, so þer ben<sup>23</sup> opere men þat wylen not be[n] con-  
 vertid to God but by gamen and pley; and now on dayes<sup>24</sup> men ben  
 not convertid by þe earnestful doynge of God ne of men, þanne<sup>25</sup> now

<sup>1</sup> Exod. 7. 13 ff.

<sup>2</sup> those who defend and support them

<sup>3</sup> omitting for the sake of pleasure

<sup>4</sup> MS. -yn

<sup>5</sup> remembrance

<sup>6</sup> MS. miraclis

<sup>7</sup> MS. -yn

<sup>8</sup> in opposition to this

<sup>9</sup> oftentimes

<sup>10</sup> are

<sup>11</sup> each one the other

<sup>12</sup> have

<sup>13</sup> because of

<sup>14</sup> MS. seeyng

<sup>15</sup> MS. wherþoru þie

<sup>16</sup> MS. -eþ

<sup>17</sup> does not pervert them

<sup>18</sup> MS. proph-

<sup>19</sup> MS. -un

<sup>20</sup> may

<sup>21</sup> MS. seene; M. fle

<sup>22</sup> whereas

<sup>23</sup> MS. been

<sup>24</sup> nowadays

<sup>25</sup> therefore

it is tyme and skilful<sup>1</sup> to assayen to converten<sup>2</sup> þe puple by pley and gamen — as by myraclis-pleyinge, and oþer maner myrþis. Also, [5] summe recreac[i]oun men moten<sup>3</sup> han; and bettere it is, or lesse yuele, þat þei han þeyre recreac[i]oun<sup>4</sup> by pleyinge of myraclis þan  
 5 by pleyinge of oþer[e] japis. Also, [6] siþen it is leueful<sup>5</sup> to han þe myraclis of God peyntid, why is [it] not as wel leueful to han þe myraclis of God pleyid,<sup>6</sup> syþen men mowen bettere reden þe wille of God, and his mervelous werkis, in þe pleyinge of hem þan in þe peyntynge, and betere þei ben holden in men[n]us mynde, and oftere  
 10 rehersid, by þe pleyinge of hem þan by þe peyntynge, for þis is a deed bok, þe toþer a qu[i]ck<sup>7</sup>?

To þe first reson we answeren,<sup>8</sup> seying [1] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge is not to þe worschipe of God, for þei ben don more to ben seen of þe worlde, and to plesen<sup>9</sup> to þe world, þanne to ben seen of  
 15 God, or to plesen<sup>9</sup> to hym. As Crist never ensaumplide hem,<sup>10</sup> but onely heþene men, þat everemore dishonouren God, seyinge þat to þe worschipe of God þat is to þe most veleynye<sup>11</sup> of hym; þerfore, as þe wickidnesse of þe misbileve of heþene men lyiþ to hemsilf<sup>12</sup> whanne þei seyn þat þe wors[c]hipyng of þeire maumetrie<sup>13</sup> is to þe worschipe  
 20 of God, so mennus<sup>14</sup> lec[c]herye now on dayes, to han þer owne lustus. liiþ<sup>15</sup> to hemsilf whanne þei seyn þat siche<sup>16</sup> miraclis<sup>17</sup>-pleying[e] is to þe worschip of God. . . .

[2] Þe same wise,<sup>18</sup> myraclis-pleyinge, albeit þat it be synne, is oþerewhile<sup>19</sup> occasion of convertyng of men; but as it is synne, it is  
 25 fer more occasion of pervertynge of men, not onely of oon synguler<sup>20</sup> persone, but of al an hool comyntc,<sup>21</sup> as it makip al a puple to ben occupied in veyn azenus þis heeste<sup>22</sup> of þe Psauter Book, þat sciþ to alle men, and namely to pristin, þat eche day reden it in þer servyse: 'Turne away myn eyen þat þei se[n] not vanytees<sup>23</sup>'; and eft<sup>24</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> reasonable<sup>2</sup> MS. -yn<sup>3</sup> must<sup>4</sup> em. M.<sup>5</sup> permissible<sup>6</sup> MS. -ed<sup>7</sup> living<sup>8</sup> MS. -yng (em. M.)<sup>9</sup> MS. -yn<sup>10</sup> taught their use by example<sup>11</sup> degradation<sup>12</sup> deceive themselves; MS. þemsilf<sup>13</sup> idols<sup>14</sup> men's<sup>15</sup> MS. lieþ<sup>16</sup> MS. suche<sup>17</sup> MS. -es<sup>18</sup> in the same manner<sup>19</sup> sometimes<sup>20</sup> single<sup>21</sup> community<sup>22</sup> command<sup>23</sup> Ps. 119. 37<sup>24</sup> again

'Lord, þou hatist<sup>1</sup> alle waytynge vanytees.<sup>2</sup>' How þanne may a prist pleyn in entirludies,<sup>3</sup> or gyve hymself to þe sigt of hem? . . .

Myraclis-pleyinge, syþen it is aȝenus þe heest of God, þat biddiþ þat þou shalt not take[n] Goddis name in ydil, it is aȝenus oure bileve, and so it may not gyven occasioun<sup>4</sup> of turnyng men to þe bileve, 5 but of pervertyng; and þerfore many men wenen<sup>5</sup> þat þer is no helle of everelastyng peyne, but þat God do[i]þ but<sup>6</sup> þreten<sup>7</sup> us, and not to do[n] it in dede — as is<sup>8</sup> pleyinge of myraclis<sup>9</sup> in sygne,<sup>10</sup> and not in dede. . . .

A prist of þe Newe Testament, þat is passid þe tyme of childehod, 10 and þat not onely shulde kepe[n] chastite, but alle opere vertues, ne<sup>11</sup> onely mynystren þe sacrament of matrimonye, but alle opere sacramentis, and, namely,<sup>12</sup> syþen hym owiþ<sup>13</sup> to mynystre[n] to alle þe puple þe precious body of Crist, awȝte<sup>14</sup> to abstene[n] hym fro al ydil pleying[e], bope of myraclis and ellis.<sup>15</sup> . . . 15

Þes men þat seyen, 'Pley[e] we a pley of Anticrist and of þe Day of Dome, þat sum man may be convertid þerby,' fallen into þe herisie of hem þat, reversyng þe Aposteyl, seyden: 'Do we yvel þingis, þat þer comen<sup>16</sup> gode þingis' — 'of whom,' as seiþ þe Aposteyl,<sup>17</sup> 'dampnyng is riȝtwise.<sup>18</sup>' 20

By þis we answeren to þe þridde<sup>19</sup> resoun, seyinge [3] þat sicke myraclis-pleyinge ȝyviþ<sup>20</sup> noon occasioun of verrey<sup>21</sup> wepyng and medeful<sup>22</sup>; but þe wepyng þat falliþ<sup>23</sup> to men and wymmen by þe sigte of sicke myraclis-pleyinge, as it is<sup>24</sup> not principaly for þeire owne<sup>25</sup> synnes, ne of þeire gode feiþ wipinneforþ,<sup>26</sup> but more of þeire 25 sigt wiþouteforþ, is not alowable byfore God, but more reprovab<sup>27</sup>; for<sup>28</sup> syþen Crist hymself reprovyde þe wymmen þat wepten upon hym in his passioun, myche more þei ben reprovab<sup>28</sup> þat wepen for

<sup>1</sup> MS. hatistde; M. hatid-  
est

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 31. 6 (Vulg.)

<sup>3</sup> interludes, plays; MS.  
entirludies

<sup>4</sup> MS. -cioun

<sup>5</sup> believe

<sup>6</sup> merely

<sup>7</sup> MS. þretip

<sup>8</sup> MS. ben

<sup>9</sup> MS. mir-

<sup>10</sup> symbolic

<sup>11</sup> nor

<sup>12</sup> especially

<sup>13</sup> he ought

<sup>14</sup> ought

<sup>15</sup> other things

<sup>16</sup> MS. -yn

<sup>17</sup> MS. gospel (blurred) aposteyl

<sup>18</sup> Rom. 3. 8

<sup>19</sup> third

<sup>20</sup> MS. -eþ

<sup>21</sup> true, sincere; MS. werrey

<sup>22</sup> profitable

<sup>23</sup> befalls

<sup>24</sup> MS. þei ben

<sup>25</sup> MS. oune

<sup>26</sup> inwardly; MS. -forþe

<sup>27</sup> MS. reprovab<sup>27</sup>

<sup>28</sup> MS. ffor

þe pley of Cristis passioun, leevynge to wepen<sup>1</sup> for þe synnes of hemsilf and of þeire chyl dren, as Crist had þe wymmen þat wepten on hym.<sup>2</sup>

And by þis we answeren to þe furþe resoun, seyinge [4] þat no man may be convertid to God but onely by þe earnestful doinge<sup>3</sup> of  
 5 God, and by noon veyn pleying[e]; for þat þat<sup>4</sup> þe word of God worchip not, ne his sacramentis, how shulde pleyinge worchen, þat is of no vertue, but ful of defaute? . . . Þe wepyng þat men wepen ofte in sicke pley, comunely is fals, witnessinge<sup>5</sup> þat þei loven<sup>6</sup> more þe lykyng<sup>7</sup> of þeire body, and of prosperite of þe world, þan lykyng  
 10 of<sup>8</sup> God, and prosperite of vertu[e] in þe soule; and, þerfore, hav- yng more compassion of peyne þan of synne, þei falsly wepen<sup>9</sup> for lakkyng of bodily prosperite, more þan for lakkyng of gostly. . . .

And herby we answeren to þe fifte resoun, seyinge [5] þat verry recreacion is leeveful ocupiynge in lasse<sup>10</sup> werkis, to more ardently  
 15 worchen<sup>11</sup> grettere werkis; and þerfore sicke myracilis-pleyinge, ne þe sixte of hem,<sup>12</sup> is no verrey recreacion,<sup>13</sup> but fals and worldly, as proven<sup>14</sup> þe dedis of þe fautours<sup>15</sup> of sicke pleyis. . . . And gif men axen what recreac[i]oun men shulden han<sup>16</sup> on þe haliday, after þeire holy contemplacioun in þe chirche, we seyen to hem two þingis: oon,  
 20 þat gif he hadde ver[r]yly ocupied<sup>17</sup> hym in contemplac[i]oun byforn, neyþer he wolde aske[n] þat question, ne han wille<sup>18</sup> to se[n]<sup>19</sup> vanyte; anopere, we seyn þat his recreacioun shulde ben in þe werkis of mercy to his neyebore, and in delityng<sup>20</sup> hym in alle good comu- nicacion wiþ his ney[e]bore, as biforn he delitid<sup>21</sup> hym in God, and  
 25 in alle opere nedeful werkis þat reson and kynde<sup>22</sup> axen.

And to þe last reson we seyn [6] þat peinture,<sup>23</sup> gif it<sup>24</sup> be verry, wiþoute mengyng<sup>25</sup> of lesyngis,<sup>26</sup> and not to curious to<sup>27</sup> myche fedynge mennus wittis, and not occasion of maumetrie<sup>28</sup> to þe puple, þei ben but as nakyd lettris to a clerk to reden<sup>29</sup> þe treupe; but so

<sup>1</sup> omitting to weep

<sup>2</sup> Luke 23. 28

<sup>3</sup> MS. doyinge

<sup>4</sup> which

<sup>5</sup> MS. falf wittnessenge

<sup>6</sup> MS. -yn

<sup>7</sup> pleasure, enjoyment

<sup>8</sup> MS. in

<sup>9</sup> MS. -yn

<sup>10</sup> smaller

<sup>11</sup> MS. worschen

<sup>12</sup> (miracle-plays)

<sup>13</sup> MS. -sion

<sup>14</sup> MS. -yn

<sup>15</sup> patrons

<sup>16</sup> MS. have

<sup>17</sup> MS. -ede

<sup>18</sup> desire

<sup>19</sup> see

<sup>20</sup> MS. di-

<sup>21</sup> MS. di-

<sup>22</sup> nature

<sup>23</sup> painting

<sup>24</sup> MS. gif it it

<sup>25</sup> mingling

<sup>26</sup> falsehoods

<sup>27</sup> intent upon

<sup>28</sup> idolatry

<sup>29</sup> MS. riden (em. M.)

ben not myraclis-pleyngis,<sup>1</sup> þat ben made more to deliten men bodily þan to ben bokis to lewid<sup>2</sup> men, and þerfore gif þei ben quike<sup>3</sup> bookis, þei ben quike bookis to schrewidnesse,<sup>4</sup> more þan to godnesse.<sup>5</sup> Gode men, þerfore, seinge þer tyme to<sup>6</sup> schort to occupyen hem in gode ernest werkis, and seinge þe day of þer rekenyng 5 neygen<sup>7</sup> faste, and unknowyng whan þei schulen<sup>8</sup> go[n] hennys, fleeen alle siche ydilnessis, hyinge<sup>9</sup> þat þei weren<sup>10</sup> wiþ þer<sup>11</sup> spouse, Crist, in þe blisse of hevene. . . .

[Ȝ]if þou hæddist had<sup>12</sup> a fadir þat hadde suffrid<sup>13</sup> a dispitous<sup>14</sup> deþ to geten þee þyn heritage, and þou þerafter woldest so lightly ber[e]n<sup>15</sup> 10 it, to make[n] þerof a pley to þe<sup>16</sup> and to alle þe puple, no doute<sup>17</sup> but þat alle gode men wolden demen<sup>18</sup> þe unkynde. Miche more, God and alle his seyntis<sup>19</sup> demen<sup>18</sup> alle þo<sup>20</sup> Cristen men unkynde þat pleyen or favouren þe pley of þe deþ or of þe myraclis<sup>21</sup> of þer most kynde Fadir, Crist, þat dyede and wrougte myraclis to bryngen men to þe evere- 15 lastande heretage of hevene.

But peraventure heere þou seist þat, [ȝ]if<sup>22</sup> pleyinge of myraclis be synne, never þe latere<sup>23</sup> it is but litil synne. But herfore,<sup>24</sup> dere frend, knowe ȝee þat eche synne, be it never so litil, [ȝ]if it be mayntenyd and prechid as gode and profitable, is deadly<sup>25</sup> synne; 20 and þerfore seiþ þe prophete<sup>26</sup>: 'Wo to hem þat seien good<sup>27</sup> yvel, and yvel good<sup>28</sup>!' and þerfore þe wyse man dampniþ<sup>29</sup> hem þat gladen<sup>30</sup> whan þei don yvel; and þerfore alle seyntis seyen þat mannysch<sup>31</sup> it is to fallen, but develiche it is to abyden stille perinne. Þerfore, siþen þis<sup>32</sup> myraclis-pleyinge is synne, as þou knowl- 25 echist,<sup>33</sup> and is stedefastly meynenyd, and also men deliten hem þerinne, no doute<sup>17</sup> but þat it is deadly synne, dampnable — develiche, not mannysch. . . .

<sup>1</sup> MS. -inge

<sup>2</sup> ignorant, unlearned

<sup>3</sup> living

<sup>4</sup> wickedness; MS. -ide-

<sup>5</sup> MS. gode-

<sup>6</sup> too

<sup>7</sup> draw near

<sup>8</sup> MS. schal

<sup>9</sup> hastening

<sup>10</sup> might be

<sup>11</sup> MS. her

<sup>12</sup> MS. hadde

<sup>13</sup> MS. -ed

<sup>14</sup> cruel; MS. -ouse

<sup>15</sup> so disregard

<sup>16</sup> for thyself

<sup>17</sup> MS. dowte

<sup>18</sup> MS. denyen

<sup>19</sup> MS. -es

<sup>20</sup> those

<sup>21</sup> MS. -es

<sup>22</sup> MS. of

<sup>23</sup> nevertheless

<sup>24</sup> in consideration of this

<sup>25</sup> MS. deadely

<sup>26</sup> MS. -ite

<sup>27</sup> MS. gode

<sup>28</sup> Isa. 5. 20

<sup>29</sup> condemneth; MS. -eþ

<sup>30</sup> rejoice

<sup>31</sup> human; MS. -ysche

<sup>32</sup> MS. þes

<sup>33</sup> dost acknowledge

As þis is a verre lesyng to seyen þat for þe love of God he wil ben a good felawe<sup>1</sup> wip þe devul, so it is a verrey<sup>2</sup> lesyng to seyen þat for þe love of God he wil pleyen his myraclis — for in neyþer is þe love of God schewid, but his hestis tobroken.<sup>3</sup> And syþen þe ceremonies<sup>4</sup> of þe olde lawe — albeit þat þei weren gyven bi God — for þei weren fleishly, shulden<sup>5</sup> not be[n] holde[n]<sup>6</sup> wip þe Newe Testament, for it is gostly<sup>7</sup>; myche more pleyinge, for it is fleys[h]ly, never beden<sup>8</sup> of God, shulde not ben don wip þe mervelouse werkis of God, for þei ben gostly; for as þe pleyinge<sup>9</sup> of Ismael wip Isaac shulde han<sup>10</sup> bynomen<sup>11</sup> Isaac his heretage, so<sup>12</sup> þe kepyng of þe ceremonies<sup>4</sup> of þe olde lawe in þe Newe Testament shulde han bynomen men þer bileve in Crist, and han made men to gon backward — þat is to seie[n], fro þe gostly lyvyng of þe Newe Testament to þe fleishly lyvyng of þe Olde Testament. . . .

15 Þis myraclis-pleyinge is verre wisse<sup>13</sup> of mennus averice and coveytise byfore, þat is maumetrie, as seiþ þe Apostele<sup>14</sup>; for þat þat<sup>15</sup> þei shulden spenden<sup>16</sup> upon þe nedis of þer negeboris, þei spenden upon þe pleyis; and to peyen þer rente and þer dette þei wolen grucche[n],<sup>17</sup> and to spende[n] two so myche<sup>18</sup> upon þer pley þei wolen noþinge  
20 grucchen. Also, to gaderen<sup>19</sup> men togidere to bien þe derre þere vetailis,<sup>20</sup> and to stiren men to glotonye, and to pride and boost,<sup>21</sup> þei pleyen þes myraclis; and, also, to han wherof to spenden on þese myraclis, and to holde[n] felawschipe of glotonye and lec[c]herie in siche<sup>22</sup> dayes of myraclis-pleyinge, þei bisien hem beform to more  
25 gredily bygilen þer neȝ[e]bors in byinge and in sellyng; and so þis pleyinge of myraclis now on dayes is verre<sup>23</sup> wisse of hidous<sup>24</sup> coveytise, þat is maumetrie.

<sup>1</sup> MS. felowe<sup>2</sup> MS. werry<sup>3</sup> MS. -un<sup>4</sup> MS. sery-<sup>5</sup> MS. þei shulden<sup>6</sup> ranked<sup>7</sup> of the spirit<sup>8</sup> bidden; MS. -yn<sup>9</sup> Gen. 21. 9 (*hudentem*, Vulgate; see the Authorized Version)<sup>10</sup> might have<sup>11</sup> taken from; MS. -yn<sup>12</sup> MS. so in þe<sup>13</sup> MS. witt-<sup>14</sup> Col. 3. 5<sup>15</sup> which<sup>16</sup> MS. -yn<sup>17</sup> grudge<sup>18</sup> twice as much<sup>19</sup> MS. gideren<sup>20</sup> buy their food the dearer<sup>21</sup> boasting<sup>22</sup> MS. sicse<sup>23</sup> MS. werre<sup>24</sup> MS. hidoous



## MIRK, INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARISH PRIESTS

The *Instructions for Parish Priests* is a versified translation of the *Pupilla Oculi* of William de Pagula (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Mirk). Its author, who was prior of Lilleshall in Shropshire, wrote also, besides a Latin *Manuale Sacerdotum*, the *Liber Festialis*, an English book of sermons which was decidedly popular, being printed eighteen times between 1483 and 1532 (Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 395). Nothing more is known of Mirk's life; the date 1403 as the time at which he flourished is conjectural.

The following selections are from Peacock's print (E.E.T.S. 31, London, 1868; revised, 1902) of MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Claud. A. 2, which he supposes to be not later than 1450, and to represent the language of an earlier time. The pages are respectively, with the exception of the third from the end, 2, 9-10, 14, 32, 43, 66-7, and 60, of the edition of 1902; the antepenultimate, 21-3 of the edition of 1868.

## THE CHARACTER OF A PRIEST

Preste, þyself thow moste be chast,  
 And say þy serves wyþowten hast,  
 That mowthe and herte acorden ifere,<sup>1</sup>  
 3ef thow wole that God þe here.  
 Of honde and mowþe þou moste be trewe, 5  
 And grete oþes thow moste enchewe<sup>2</sup>;  
 In worde and dede þou moste be mylde,  
 Bothe to mon and to chylde.  
 Dronkelec<sup>3</sup> and glotonye,  
 Pruyde and slouþe and envye, 10  
 Alle þow moste putten away,  
 3ef þow wolt serve God to pay.<sup>4</sup>  
 That þe nedeth, ete and drynke,  
 But sle<sup>5</sup> þy lust for any thyng.  
 Tavernes also thow moste forsake, 15  
 .And marchaundyse þow schalt not make;  
 Wrastelynge, and schotyng,<sup>6</sup> and suche maner game,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> agree (*lit.* accord together)<sup>2</sup> eschew<sup>3</sup> drunkenness<sup>4</sup> please<sup>5</sup> slay, crush<sup>6</sup> shooting<sup>7</sup> sports of such sort

Thow mygte not use<sup>1</sup> wythowte blame ;  
 Hawkynge, huntynge, and dawnsynge,  
 Thow moste forgo for any thyng ;  
 Cuttede<sup>2</sup> clothes and pykede<sup>3</sup> schone,  
 5 Thye gode fame þey wole fordone.<sup>4</sup>  
 Marketes and feyres I the forbede,  
 But<sup>5</sup> hyt be for the more<sup>6</sup> nede.  
 In honeste<sup>7</sup> clothes thow moste gon :  
 Baselarde<sup>8</sup> ny bawdryke<sup>9</sup> were þow non.  
 10 Berde and crowne thow moste be schave,  
 Ȝef thow wole thy ordere save.  
 Of mete and drynke þow moste be fre<sup>10</sup>  
 To pore and ryche, by<sup>11</sup> thy degre.  
 Ȝerne<sup>12</sup> thow moste thy Sawtere<sup>13</sup> rede,  
 15 And of the Day of Dome have drede ;  
 And evere do gode ageynes<sup>14</sup> evele,  
 Or elles thow mygte not lyve wele.

## BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH

No non in chyrche stonde schal,  
 Ny<sup>15</sup> lene to pyler ny to wal,  
 20 But fayre<sup>16</sup> on kneus þey schule hem sette —  
 Knelynge down upon the flette<sup>17</sup> —  
 And pray to God wyth herte meke  
 To geve hem grace, and mercy eke.  
 Soffere hem to make no bere,<sup>18</sup>  
 25 But ay to be in here<sup>19</sup> prayere ;

1 practise  
 2 cut short (?)  
 3 long-toed  
 4 make way with  
 5 unless  
 6 greater  
 7 decent, simple

8 short sword, dagger  
 9 sword-belt  
 10 generous  
 11 according to  
 12 earnestly, zealously  
 13 Psalter

14 in return for  
 15 nor  
 16 properly  
 17 floor  
 18 noise  
 19 their

4. pykede: 'The pikes were sometimes made like the tails of scorpions, at others twisted into the form of a ram's horn' (Peacock's note, ed. 1902, p. 73).

And whenne þe gospels ired<sup>1</sup> be schalle,  
 Teche hem þenne to stonde up alle,  
 And blesse<sup>2</sup> feyre as þey conne  
 Whenne 'Gloria tibi'<sup>3</sup> ys bygonne.  
 And whenne þe Gospel ys idone, 5  
 Teche hem eft to knele downe sone;  
 And whenne they here the belle ryng  
 To that holy sakerynge,<sup>4</sup>  
 Teche hem knele downe, boþe gonge and olde,  
 And boþe here hondes up to holde, 10  
 And say þenne in þys manere,  
 Feyre and softly, wythowte bere:  
 'Jesu, Lord, welcome þow be,  
 In forme of bred as I þe se.  
 Jesu, for thy holy name, 15  
 Schelde me to-day fro synne and schame.  
 Schryfte<sup>5</sup> and howsele,<sup>6</sup> Lord, þou graunte me bo,<sup>7</sup>  
 Er that I schale hennes go,  
 And verre<sup>8</sup> contrycyone of my synne,  
 That I, Lord, never dye thereinne; 20  
 And, as þow were of a may<sup>9</sup> ibore,<sup>10</sup>  
 Sofere<sup>11</sup> me never to be forlore,<sup>12</sup>  
 But whenne þat I schale hennes wende,  
 Grawnte me þe blysse wythowten ende.'

## THE CREED

I beleve in oure holy Drygt,<sup>13</sup> 25  
 Fader of hevene, God almygt,  
 þat alle thyng has wrogt —  
 Hevene and erþe, and alle of nogt.  
 On Jesu Cryst I beleve also,

<sup>1</sup> read<sup>2</sup> make the sign of the cross
<sup>3</sup> 'Glory be to thee, O God,'  
 sung between the Epistle  
 and the Gospel
<sup>4</sup> consecration of the elements<sup>5</sup> confession and absolution<sup>6</sup> receiving of the Eucharist<sup>7</sup> both<sup>8</sup> true<sup>9</sup> maiden<sup>10</sup> born<sup>11</sup> suffer<sup>12</sup> lost<sup>13</sup> Lord

Hys only Sone, and no mo,  
 þat was conceyvede of þe Holy Spyryt,  
 And of a mayde ibore quyt<sup>1</sup>;  
 And afterward under Pounce Pylate  
 5 Was itake<sup>2</sup> for vye<sup>3</sup> and hate,  
 And soffrede peyne and passyone,  
 And on þe croys was idone<sup>4</sup>;  
 Ded and buryed he was also,  
 And wente to helle to spoyle<sup>5</sup> oure fo,  
 10 And ros to lyve the pryde day,  
 And stegh<sup>6</sup> to hevne þe xl day.  
 Ȝet he schale come wyþ woundes rede,  
 To deme<sup>7</sup> þe quyke and þe dede.  
 In þe Holy Gost I leve<sup>8</sup> welle;  
 15 In Holy Chyrche and hyre spelle,<sup>9</sup>  
 In Goddes body I beleve nowe,  
 Amonge hys seyntes to geve me rowe,<sup>10</sup>  
 And of my synnes þat I have done  
 To have plenere<sup>11</sup> remyssyone;  
 20 And when my body from deth schal ryse,  
 I leve to be wyth God and hyse,<sup>12</sup>  
 And have the joye þat lasteþ ay;  
 God graunte hymself þat I so may!

### THE VANITIES OF THE FLESH

Hast þou ben prowde and glad in thoght  
 25 Of any mysdede þat þou hast wrogt?  
 Hast þou ben prowde of any gyse<sup>13</sup>  
 Of any þynge þat þou dedust use,  
 Of party<sup>14</sup> hosen, of pykede schone,  
 Of fytered<sup>15</sup> cloþes (as foles done)

<sup>1</sup> quite<sup>2</sup> seized<sup>3</sup> envy<sup>4</sup> done to death<sup>5</sup> despoil<sup>6</sup> ascended<sup>7</sup> judge<sup>8</sup> believe<sup>9</sup> teaching<sup>10</sup> rest<sup>11</sup> full, complete<sup>12</sup> his<sup>13</sup> appearance, look<sup>14</sup> party-colored<sup>15</sup> slashed

Of londes rentes, of gay howsyng<sup>1</sup>,  
 Of mony servauntes to þy byddyng<sup>2</sup>,  
 Or of hors fat and rownde,  
 Or for þy godes<sup>3</sup> were hole and sownde,  
 Or for þow art gret and ryche 5  
 þat no neȝbore ys þe ilyche,<sup>4</sup>  
 Or for þow art a vertues mon,  
 And const<sup>5</sup> more þen anoþer con?  
 Ȝef þou have be<sup>6</sup> on þys maner prowde,  
 Schryf<sup>6</sup> þe, sone, and telle hyt out. 10

## SINS OF CARELESSNESS

Hast þow icome by chyrcheȝorde,<sup>7</sup>  
 And for þe dede iprayed no worde?  
 Hast þow ay cast up<sup>8</sup> lydegate<sup>9</sup>  
 þere bestus have go in ate?  
 Hast þow istruey<sup>10</sup> corn or gras, 15  
 Or oþer þyng<sup>10</sup> þat sowen was?  
 Hast þou icome in any sty,<sup>11</sup>  
 And cropped ȝerus<sup>12</sup> of come þe by?  
 Art þou iwont over corn to ryde,  
 When þou myȝtest have go bysyde? 20

## THE PRONOUNCING OF EXCOMMUNICATION

þe grete sentens I wryte þe here,  
 þat foure tymes in þe ȝere  
 þou schalte pronownce withowtyn lette,<sup>13</sup>  
 Whan þe parich is toȝyður mette.  
 þou schalte pronownce þis hydowse þinge 25  
 Wit cros, and candul, and belle-knyllynge,<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> trappings  
<sup>2</sup> goods, possessions  
<sup>3</sup> like  
<sup>4</sup> knowest  
<sup>5</sup> been  
<sup>6</sup> shrive, confess

<sup>7</sup> past a churchyard  
<sup>8</sup> fastened up (so as to prevent  
 the entrance of cattle)  
<sup>9</sup> gate between pasture-land  
 and ploughed land  
<sup>10</sup> destroyed

<sup>11</sup> path  
<sup>12</sup> ears  
<sup>13</sup> hindrance  
<sup>14</sup> tolling

- þe furste Sononday affter Myghellfeste <sup>1</sup>;  
 Myd-Lenton <sup>2</sup> Sonday schal be neste <sup>3</sup>;  
 þe Trenite feste is þe þridde, os <sup>4</sup> I þe say;  
 þe ferthe is þe Sononday aftur Candulmes day.  
 5 Spelle <sup>5</sup> hit reddely, <sup>6</sup> for nogte þou wonde, <sup>7</sup>  
 þat <sup>8</sup> alle men þe undurstonde.

## FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (I)

- By autorite of God almigti, Fader <sup>9</sup> and Son and Holy Gost, and of  
 al þe seyntes of heven. First, <sup>10</sup> we accursen al them that broken <sup>11</sup> the  
 pece of Holy Chirch or sturben hit; . . . all þat falsen or use false  
 10 measures, busshelles, galones, and potelles, <sup>12</sup> quartes, [cuppes], or false  
 wightes, poundes or poundrelles, <sup>13</sup> or false ellenyerdes, <sup>14</sup> wetyngly oþer  
 þan þe lawe of þe lond woll; . . . also all þat distroubleth þe pes of  
 Englund, and traitors that ben false or isenting <sup>15</sup> to falsenes, agen þe  
 king or the reame <sup>16</sup>; . . . also all that helpen with strength, or with vit-  
 15 ayles, or soccouren Jewes or Sarzons <sup>17</sup> agen Cristendom; also all þat  
 sleen childeren, or distroyen boren or unborn, with drynkes or with  
 wichcraft, and all her consentes <sup>18</sup>; also all þat stondeth or herkeneth  
 by nyktes under wolles, dores, or wyndowes, for to spy touching evil,  
 and all house-brekeres and man-quellers. <sup>19</sup>. . .

## FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (II)

- 20 By þe auctorite of oure Fadur, of þe Sone, of þe Holy Goste, and off  
 ou[r]e lady Seynte Mary, Goddus modur of heven, and alle oþur vir-  
 gynes, and Seynte Myhel, <sup>20</sup> and alle oþur angellus and archangellus, and  
 Petur and Poule, and oþur apostolus, and Seynte Stewne, <sup>21</sup> and alle oþur  
 martyres, and Seynte Nicholas, and alle oþur confessoures, <sup>22</sup> and alle

<sup>1</sup> Michaelmas<sup>2</sup> Mid-Lenten<sup>3</sup> next<sup>4</sup> as<sup>5</sup> speak, say; MS. sepelle<sup>6</sup> promptly, willingly<sup>7</sup> shrink, fear<sup>8</sup> so that<sup>9</sup> MS. ffader<sup>10</sup> MS. ffirst<sup>11</sup> break<sup>12</sup> a measure for liquids, equal  
to half a gallon<sup>13</sup> scales, balances<sup>14</sup> ell-measures<sup>15</sup> consenting<sup>16</sup> realm<sup>17</sup> Saracens<sup>18</sup> accomplices<sup>19</sup> murderers<sup>20</sup> Michael<sup>21</sup> Stephen<sup>22</sup> those who suffered perse-  
cution, but not martyr-  
dom, for the sake of their  
religion

þe holy halowes <sup>1</sup> of hewen, we acurson and waryon <sup>2</sup> and departon <sup>3</sup> from alle gode dedus and prayeres of Holy Chyrche, and dampnon <sup>4</sup> into þe peyne of helle, alle þoo <sup>5</sup> þat have done þeis articoles þat we have sayde before, tyl <sup>6</sup> þei comen to amendemente. We acurson hem be þe auctorite off þe courete off Rome, witinne- and witouteforþe, <sup>7</sup> 5  
 sclepyng and wakyng, goyng, sytting and standinge, lyggyng, ofbowne <sup>8</sup> þe erthe and undur þe erthe, . . . in wode, in watur, in felde, and in towne. We acurson be þe Fadur and Sone and Holy Goste. Acursyn hem angelus and archangellus, and alle þe nyne ordorus of heven. Acursyn hem patriarchus, prophetus, and apostolus, and alle <sup>10</sup>  
 Goddus disciplus, and alle holy innocentus, martyres, confessoures, and virgyne, monkus, cannonus, eremytus, <sup>9</sup> and prestus and clerkus, þat þei have no parte off masses ne mateynus <sup>10</sup> ne evensonge, ne of none oþur gode prayeres þat bene done in Holy Chyrche, no in none oþur holy place; bot þe peynus of helle for to be here mede, <sup>11</sup> wit Judas þat <sup>15</sup>  
 betrayed oure Lord Jesu Cryste, and þe lyf of hem be putte oute of þe bokus of lyfe, tyl þay comen to amendemente, and satisfaccion made. Fiat, fiat! Amen!

þan þou þi candul kaste to grownde,  
 Ande spytte <sup>12</sup> þerto þe same stownde, <sup>13</sup>  
 And lette also þe belle knylle,  
 To make hertus þe more grylle. <sup>14</sup>

20

## THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

'Perhaps it is hardly too much to say that no literary production since the time of the apostles has contributed so much to Western civilization as the Benedictine Rule; and yet its author probably never regarded it as a literary production at all' (Cook and Tinker, *Sel. Trans. from Old Eng. Prose*, p. 278).

Benedict was born at the end of the fifth century; by the end of the sixth his Rule was chosen by Pope Gregory the Great for a monastery Gregory had founded at Rome. By the end of the eighth century — the age of Charlemagne

<sup>1</sup> saints<sup>2</sup> execrate<sup>3</sup> separate, shut off<sup>4</sup> condemn<sup>5</sup> those<sup>6</sup> MS. tul<sup>7</sup> at home and abroad<sup>8</sup> above<sup>9</sup> hermits, recluses<sup>10</sup> matins<sup>11</sup> reward<sup>12</sup> spit<sup>13</sup> at the same time<sup>14</sup> (to) shudder, tremble

—the Rule was almost universally followed in European monasteries. Throughout the Middle Ages the Benedictine monks were famous for their learning, and, by their zeal in copying classical manuscripts, preserved most of those that have come down to us. For a general account of them, see Montalembert's

*Monks of the West*, Book 4.

The early English manuscripts of the Rule are many of them based on a version written for nuns. That from which our selections are taken is MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Vespasian A. 25, in the Northern dialect of the earlier fifteenth century, as printed by Kock (E.E.T.S. 120), the respective pages being 95-6, 99-100, 102-5, 115-6.

### THE HOURS FOR MEALS

Of time of mete now es to lere,  
 In times and sesons of þe zere.  
 Fro Pas<sup>1</sup> right unto Witsunnday,  
 At þe sext our<sup>2</sup> ete sal þai,  
 5 þe whilk es midday for to mene,  
 And sine<sup>3</sup> sal þai soupe<sup>4</sup> bedene.<sup>5</sup>  
 In somer, fro<sup>6</sup> Witsunday be past,  
 Wedinsday and Friday sal þai fast,  
 Bot-if<sup>7</sup> þai oþer<sup>8</sup> swink<sup>9</sup> or swete  
 10 In hay or corn with travel grete.  
 And if þai non slike<sup>10</sup> travel done,<sup>11</sup>  
 On þos days sal þai fast to none.<sup>12</sup>  
 And on oþer days, als I air<sup>13</sup> saide,  
 At mydday sal þer mete be graide.<sup>14</sup>  
 15 Bot al þis sal be purued<sup>15</sup> playn,  
 At þe ordinance of þer soverayn<sup>16</sup>;  
 What seson so<sup>17</sup> scho<sup>18</sup> putes þam to,  
 Withoutin groching<sup>19</sup> sal þai do.  
 Fro time þat December begin  
 20 Until clene Lentyn cum in,

<sup>1</sup> Easter

<sup>2</sup> sixth hour

<sup>3</sup> afterwards

<sup>4</sup> sup

<sup>5</sup> together

<sup>6</sup> from the time that

<sup>7</sup> unless

<sup>8</sup> either

<sup>9</sup> labor

<sup>10</sup> such

<sup>11</sup> do, engage in

<sup>12</sup> noon

<sup>13</sup> before

<sup>14</sup> ready, prepared

<sup>15</sup> provided

<sup>16</sup> prioress, superior

<sup>17</sup> whatsoever manner of life  
according to the season

<sup>18</sup> she

<sup>19</sup> grumbling



At hi<sup>1</sup> none sal þai ete ;  
 þer lesons<sup>2</sup> sal þai not forgete.  
 In Lentyn sal non to mete gang  
 Efter<sup>3</sup> þe our of evynsang ;  
 And al servys<sup>4</sup> þan sal þai sai 5  
 Efter mete, bi light of day,  
 So þat al be rewlið right  
 At wend<sup>5</sup> to bede bi dais lyght.

## DAILY OCCUPATIONS

All þat wons in religioun<sup>6</sup>  
 Aw<sup>7</sup> to have sum ocupacioun, 10  
 Ouper<sup>8</sup> in kirk of<sup>9</sup> hali bedes<sup>10</sup>  
 Or stodying in oder stedes.<sup>11</sup>  
 For ydilnes, os sais Sant Paul,  
 Es grete enmy unto þe saul ;  
 And þerfor es ordand<sup>12</sup> þat þai 15  
 Sum gude warkes sal wirk alway,  
 And sum certane times of þe ȝer  
 To wirk with hand, os men may her.  
 Fro Pase, thurgh al Cristyndome,  
 Til þe kalandes<sup>13</sup> of October cum, 20  
 Unto prime<sup>14</sup> sone sal þai rise,  
 And sine ilkon<sup>15</sup> wirk on þer wise  
 What so es most nedeful labore,  
 Until þe tyme of þe third oure.  
 And lessons sal þai rede þan next 25  
 Fro þe third our unto þe sext.  
 And efterward thurgh wirchep  
 Fro oures<sup>16</sup> and mes<sup>17</sup> wend unto mete.

<sup>1</sup> high<sup>2</sup> readings<sup>3</sup> MS. or efter<sup>4</sup> the whole service<sup>5</sup> to go<sup>6</sup> dwell in religion, lead  
a religious life<sup>7</sup> ought<sup>8</sup> either<sup>9</sup> with<sup>10</sup> prayers<sup>11</sup> other places<sup>12</sup> ordained<sup>13</sup> first<sup>14</sup> church-service celebrated  
about 5 or 6 A.M.<sup>15</sup> each one<sup>16</sup> hours of service<sup>17</sup> mass

And efter mete, þen sal þai slepe,  
 And silence al samen <sup>1</sup> sal þai kepe,  
 So þat none do oper disese,<sup>2</sup>  
 Bot ilkon paid <sup>3</sup> oper to plese.  
 5 Sone efterward, when þis es done,  
 And þai haf said þe our of none,  
 Until þeir werk þen sal þai gang,  
 Unto þe tyme of evynsang,  
 To scher <sup>4</sup> or bind, if it be nede,  
 10 Or dike,<sup>5</sup> or els do oper dede,  
 For unto travel wor we born,  
 And al our elders us beform.  
 Bot travel aw mesurd to be  
 Til ilkon efter þer degre,  
 15 To men or women, old or ȝing,  
 Ilkon to do divers þing.  
 Fro October, os I are <sup>6</sup> sayd,  
 Unto Lentyn es þus purvayd <sup>7</sup> :  
 In orisons, and in þer oures  
 20 And lessons, sal be þer laboures.

#### LENTEN OBSERVANCE

In Lentyn tyme þen sal þai rise  
 Arly, and say þer servyse  
 And orisons til Godes honoure,  
 Until it be past þe third oure.  
 25 þan to þe tent our <sup>8</sup> sal þai wirk,  
 And sine til non <sup>9</sup> serve in þe kirk.  
 And in Lentyn aw þam to luke <sup>10</sup>  
 þat ilkon have ordand a buke,  
 Whilk sal be red right to þe end,  
 30 Als þe cours of þe rewl hase kend.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> together<sup>2</sup> discomfort, disturbance<sup>3</sup> content<sup>4</sup> cut, reap<sup>5</sup> make ditches<sup>6</sup> before<sup>7</sup> provided for<sup>8</sup> tenth hour<sup>9</sup> noon<sup>10</sup> see to it<sup>11</sup> taught

And who so groches oght here ogayn <sup>1</sup>  
 Sal be punest with grevus payne.  
 Who tentes to trofils, <sup>2</sup> and wil not rede,  
 And þai overtayn <sup>3</sup> with þat dede,  
 With payn þai sal amendes make,  
 So þat oþer ensaumpil take.

5

## THE ENTERTAINMENT OF GUESTS

A priores aw to be prest <sup>4</sup>  
 For to resave ilka gude gest,  
 And at hir myght þam mere <sup>5</sup> make  
 Soveraynly for Godes sake,  
 Namely <sup>6</sup> þam þat er <sup>7</sup> pilgrams knawn,  
 And pouer <sup>8</sup> þat hase <sup>9</sup> not of þer awn.  
 For God until [us] þus sal say  
 In dome, <sup>10</sup> apon þe dredful day :  
*Hospes eram, et colligistis me —*  
 ' I was a gest in my degre,  
 And in þour hous ge herberd me.'  
 Þan aw us <sup>11</sup> gestes and gud pilgrims  
 For to releve in al pere lims,  
 And for to refresch in al right,  
 Als it es det <sup>12</sup> be day and nyght,  
 And oblis <sup>13</sup> þam kissink <sup>14</sup> of pese,  
 Perfite luf for to encres.  
 And when þai cum, bi day or nyght,  
 And also when þai wend to flight,  
 Loute <sup>15</sup> unto þam aw <sup>16</sup> grete and small,  
 Or els unto þer fete at <sup>17</sup> fall,  
 Witand <sup>18</sup> wele in þat sesoune  
 Þai honour Crist in þer persoune ;

10

15

20

25

<sup>1</sup> against this  
<sup>2</sup> attends to trifles  
<sup>3</sup> if they are found out  
<sup>4</sup> ready, eager  
<sup>5</sup> merry  
<sup>6</sup> especially

<sup>7</sup> are  
<sup>8</sup> poor people  
<sup>9</sup> have  
<sup>10</sup> judgment  
<sup>11</sup> it befits us, we ought  
<sup>12</sup> due

<sup>13</sup> courteously give  
<sup>14</sup> kiss  
<sup>15</sup> to bow  
<sup>16</sup> ought  
<sup>17</sup> to  
<sup>18</sup> knowing

For who so resaves þe pure man  
In Crist name, resaves Crist þan.

A soveraryn<sup>1</sup> sal ger gestes kepe<sup>2</sup>

With honour and with gret wirchepe,

5 Or rede to þam, or ger be rede,

How hali men þer lives lede. . . .

Scho sal gif water unto þer hend,

And wesch þeir fete, als Crist hase kend.<sup>3</sup>

When þai so do, þai sal reherce,

10 Word bi word, and say þis verce :

*Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio —*

'We have resavyd, Lord, þi mercy,

In þe mydes of þe hows haly.' . . .

þe gestes kechin<sup>4</sup> sal be set

15 Allone, þat it no noþer<sup>5</sup> let,

So þat þai be servyd at ese,

And ilk man redy þam to plese,

And luk þer bedes<sup>6</sup> ordand bene

With litter larch<sup>7</sup> and clothes clene,

20 And swilk servandes assigned þam til

þat wil þam serve with gude wil.

None aw þam do for to greve,

Ne speke with þam withoutyn leve,

Bot loutand<sup>8</sup> hals<sup>9</sup> þam wher þai go,

25 And with blissing pase furth þam fro.

### THE NUN'S CLOTHING

Thay sal be cleder ful wele, we wate,

Efter þer place es cald or hate.

For in cald stedes<sup>10</sup> who so er sted,<sup>11</sup>

þam nedes for to be better cled ;

30 And<sup>12</sup> who er in hate cuntre,

<sup>1</sup> prioress

<sup>2</sup> cause guests to be entertained

<sup>3</sup> taught

<sup>4</sup> kitchen

<sup>5</sup> other

<sup>6</sup> beds

<sup>7</sup> large straw-bed

<sup>8</sup> bowing

<sup>9</sup> salute

<sup>10</sup> places

<sup>11</sup> situated

<sup>12</sup> MS. in

Sich clething to þam may be ;  
 And al it sal be purvayd playne  
 At þe ordinance of þeir soverayne.  
 In comun places for alkins note <sup>1</sup>  
 Sufficis a kirtil <sup>2</sup> and a cote <sup>3</sup> ; 5  
 And mantels sal þai have certayne,  
 In winter dubil, in somer playne ;  
 And changing kirtils sal þai have  
 In nyghtes þer oþer for to save.  
 Schos þai sall have, whor þai dwel, 10  
 Swilk os þai may find for to sel. <sup>4</sup>  
 Of þe farest <sup>5</sup> þai sal not by,  
 Bot þe vilist ful bowsumly. <sup>6</sup>  
 And þeir soverayn aw for to se  
 Þat þair gere <sup>7</sup> evynly o[r]dand <sup>8</sup> be, 15  
 Mete for þam þat sal it fang, <sup>9</sup>  
 And noþer to schort ne to lang.  
 When þai tak new, þe old sal þen  
 Be partid til <sup>10</sup> pouer women.  
 And when þai sal went <sup>11</sup> in cuntre, 20  
 Þair clething sal mor honest <sup>12</sup> be ;  
 And home agayn when þai cum eft,  
 Þen sal þai were slik os <sup>13</sup> þai left.  
 Until þeir beddyng sal þai have  
 At <sup>14</sup> suffice þam fro cauld to save. 25  
 And oftsithes sall þer bed be sene,  
 Þat no tresure be þam betwene,  
 Ne no gude þat to þam may gayne <sup>15</sup> ;  
 Who so it hase, sall soffer payne.  
 For whi <sup>16</sup> þer soverayn sal þam bede <sup>17</sup> 30  
 All unto þam þat es nede.

<sup>1</sup> all kinds of work  
<sup>2</sup> gown  
<sup>3</sup> skirt, petticoat  
<sup>4</sup> for sale  
<sup>5</sup> fairest  
<sup>6</sup> meekly

<sup>7</sup> apparel  
<sup>8</sup> fitly ordered ; em. K.  
<sup>9</sup> receive  
<sup>10</sup> distributed to  
<sup>11</sup> go  
<sup>12</sup> finer

<sup>13</sup> such as  
<sup>14</sup> (enough) to  
<sup>15</sup> be useful  
<sup>16</sup> wherefore  
<sup>17</sup> offer, give them

## THE PORTER

Ane old man sal þe zates zeme<sup>1</sup>  
 þat witti es, and wele wil seme<sup>2</sup>  
 For to welcum with wordes fre  
 Evyrilk man in þer degre.  
 5 His dwelling sal be dyght<sup>3</sup> algayte<sup>4</sup>  
 In a cel beside þe zate,  
 So þat he be redy ay  
 Til al<sup>5</sup> þat cums be nyght or day.  
 And when so ony knok or call,  
 10 Softli answer þam he sall;  
 To her þer wordes sal he be bayn,<sup>6</sup>  
 And bryng þam grath<sup>7</sup> answer ogayn.  
 And baynly sal he bryng and take  
 Al þat men sendes for Godes sake.  
 15 And ever him aw to zeme þe zate  
 For al aventurs,<sup>8</sup> arely and layte.  
 In abbais aw to be al thing  
 þat nedeful es to þeir lifing,  
 Als watter for to do al þer dedis,  
 20 Miln,<sup>9</sup> kiln,<sup>10</sup> and oven, and al þat nedis, . . .  
 So þat þai sal not outward gang  
 To say, for dred, or wirk, oght wrang.

## ROBERT MANNYNG OF BRUNNE, HANDLING SIN

Robert Mannyng of Brunne (now Bourne), in Lincolnshire, wrote his poem, the *Handlyng Synne*, in 1303, when he had for fifteen years belonged to the priory of Gilbertine canons at Sempringham (six miles from Bourne). The work is a poetical adaptation of the *Manuel des Pechiez* of William of Wadington, who wrote some time in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307). While characterizing the seven deadly sins, etc., it pictures in a lively way the life and vices of the age, and inserts tales here and there to point a moral. The poem

<sup>1</sup> keep<sup>2</sup> be suitable<sup>3</sup> prepared<sup>4</sup> always<sup>5</sup> for all<sup>6</sup> ready<sup>7</sup> direct<sup>8</sup> with reference to all contingencies<sup>9</sup> mill<sup>10</sup> bakery

has been spoken of as 'the work which more than any former one foreshadowed the path that English literature was to tread from that time forward' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Mannyng); and, in general, it has been more popular than the writer's other chief work, a chronicle-history of England. Of Mannyng's language Ten Brink says (*Early English Literature* 1. 302): 'Robert of Brunne is without doubt one of the writers who served most to spread the East-Midland dialect toward the south. And through him many new Romanic words were probably either introduced into the English literary language, or at least established there.'

With the caution in 303 10 ff. may be compared the following (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15. 59):

A man that intendyth to mynstrels shall soone be weddyd to poverte. . .  
 Iff mynstrels pleace the, feyne as thow herde them, but thynke uppone another.  
 He that lawith [laughs] at a mynstrels worde geueth to hym a wedde [forfeit, pledge].

Our selections are from E.E.T.S. 119 and 123, which print the version of this poem (12,630 lines long) in MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 1701; and, in parallel columns, the corresponding parts of Wadington's Old French. The selections are, respectively, lines 985-1054, 4571-4614, 4739-4774, 8987-9006, 10,729-10,798.

#### THE PROPER WAY OF KEEPING HOLY DAYS

Ȝyf þou make karol<sup>1</sup> or play,  
 þou halewyst nat þyn halyday.  
 Ȝyf þou come overgladly þartyl,<sup>2</sup>  
 And gyvest þarto mochyl<sup>3</sup> þy wyl,  
 Yn þat hast þou mochyl plyȝt,<sup>4</sup> 5  
 For synne wyl come þurgh swyche syȝt.  
 Ȝyf þou ever settyst swerde eyþer ryng  
 For to gadyr a wrastlyng,  
 þe halyday þou holdest noght,  
 Whan swyche bobaunce<sup>5</sup> for þe ys wroȝt: 10  
 Cuntek<sup>6</sup> þere comyþ, or ouþer bobaunce,  
 And sum man slayn, or lost þurȝe chaunce.  
 Ȝyf þou ever yn felde, eyþer<sup>7</sup> in toune,  
 Dedyst<sup>8</sup> floure-gerland or coroune<sup>9</sup>  
 To make wommen to gadyr þere, 15

<sup>1</sup> dancing in a ring, accompanied by singing

<sup>2</sup> thereto, to it

<sup>3</sup> greatly

<sup>4</sup> danger

<sup>5</sup> pomp

<sup>6</sup> quarreling, discord

<sup>7</sup> or

<sup>8</sup> madest

<sup>9</sup> coronal, wreath

To se whych þat feyrer were,  
 Þys ys agens þe commaundement,  
 And þe halyday for þe ys shent<sup>1</sup>;  
 Hyt ys a gaderyng for lecherye,  
 5 And ful grete pryde, and herte hye.<sup>2</sup>  
 Ȝyf þou ever janglyst<sup>3</sup> at messe,  
 Yn þe cherche with more or lesse,  
 And lettyst<sup>4</sup> men of<sup>5</sup> here preyers,  
 For hem perel soþely þou berys;  
 10 Þe halyday þou holdest nat ryȝt,  
 And lettyst to wurschyp God almyȝt.  
 Halyday was made for preyere,  
 To God oure herende<sup>6</sup> for to bere.  
 Certys we ouȝt þan with ful mynde  
 15 To preye God us of synne unbynde,<sup>7</sup>  
 And yn gode lyfe us wysse and rede,<sup>8</sup>  
 And forgeve us al oure mysdede.  
 Ȝyf þou hauntyst<sup>9</sup> to make þy play  
 At þe taverne on þe halyday,  
 20 To many on<sup>10</sup> comyþ þarfore evyl  
 Þurgh cumberaunce<sup>11</sup> of þe devyl.  
 Holy Chyrche wyl þe werne<sup>12</sup>  
 Þe halyday to go to þe taverne,  
 And namly byfore þe noun,<sup>13</sup>  
 25 Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be doun.  
 Taverne ys þe devyls knyfe;  
 Hyt sleþ<sup>14</sup> þe, oþer soule or lyfe;  
 One of þys shal hyt do,  
 Ȝyf þou haunte<sup>15</sup> comunly parto.  
 30 Hyt shortyþ þy lyfe, over moche drynkyng,  
 And sleþ þy soule with bakbytyngge;  
 Hyt wastyþ þy body, and makeþ þe drye,

<sup>1</sup> spoiled, ruined<sup>2</sup> high heart<sup>3</sup> dost engage in altercation<sup>4</sup> dost hinder<sup>5</sup> from<sup>6</sup> petition<sup>7</sup> set us free from sin<sup>8</sup> direct and counsel<sup>9</sup> art accustomed<sup>10</sup> many a one<sup>11</sup> harassing, temptation<sup>12</sup> forbid<sup>13</sup> noon<sup>14</sup> slayeth<sup>15</sup> resort



And gadryþ<sup>1</sup> lecherye to glotonye ;  
 And þe comaundment ys brokun,  
 And þe halyday, byfore of spokun.

Ȝyf þou do any man o dawē<sup>2</sup>  
 On þe halyday for any lawe,  
 Swyche men grevusly werche  
 Aȝens þe state of Holy Chyrche ;  
 For holy preyere, and for þe pees,  
 Þe halyday God hyt chees.

5

Ȝyf þou ever with jogeloure,<sup>3</sup>  
 With hasa[r]doure,<sup>4</sup> or with rotoure,<sup>5</sup>  
 Hauntyst taverne, or were to any pere<sup>6</sup>  
 To pley at þe ches or at þe tablere,<sup>7</sup>  
 Specyaly before þe noun,  
 Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be doun,  
 Hyt ys aȝens þe comaundment  
 And Holy Cherches asent.<sup>8</sup>

10

15

Ȝyf þou be *infra sacros*,<sup>9</sup>  
 And art a clerk, and hast þe los<sup>10</sup>  
 Of subdekene, or dekene by name,  
 So moche art þou þe more to blame.  
 Þys<sup>11</sup> lerned men ȝyven ensample so  
 Þat þe lewd<sup>12</sup> men þe more mysdo.<sup>13</sup>

20

### THE EVIL OF TOURNAMENTS

Of tournamentys þat are forbede  
 Yn Holy Cherche, as men rede,  
 Of tournamentys Y preve<sup>14</sup> þerynne,  
 Sevene poyntes of dedly synne :  
 Fyrst ys pryde, as þou wel wost,<sup>15</sup>  
 Avauntement,<sup>16</sup> bobaunce, and bost ;

25

<sup>1</sup> adds ; MS: gadryd

<sup>2</sup> kill any man

<sup>3</sup> juggler (one who entertained with songs, stories, or tricks)

<sup>4</sup> player at dice

<sup>5</sup> player on the rote

<sup>6</sup> a companion to any one

<sup>7</sup> backgammon

<sup>8</sup> sanction

<sup>9</sup> of the lower clergy

<sup>10</sup> praise, honor

<sup>11</sup> these

<sup>12</sup> ignorant

<sup>13</sup> do evil

<sup>14</sup> prove

<sup>15</sup> knowest

<sup>16</sup> self-glorification

Of ryche atyre ys here avaunce,<sup>1</sup>  
 Prykyng<sup>2</sup> here hors with olypraunce.<sup>3</sup>  
 Wete þou wel þer ys envye  
 Whan one seep̃ anoþer do maystrye<sup>4</sup>;  
 5 Oþer yn wurdys oþer yn dedys,  
 Envye moste of alle hem ledys.  
 Yre<sup>5</sup> and wrap̃e may þey nat late<sup>6</sup>;  
 Ofte are tournamentys made for hate.  
 3yf every knygt lovede oþer weyl,  
 10 Tournamentes shulde be never a deyl<sup>7</sup>;  
 And certys þey falle yn sloghnes,<sup>8</sup>  
 Þey love hyt more þan God oþer messe;  
 And, þerof ys hyt no doute,  
 Þey dyspende more gode þer aboute<sup>9</sup> —  
 15 þat ys geve alle to folye —  
 þan to any dede of mercy.  
 And gyt may nat, on no wyse,  
 Be forgete<sup>10</sup> Dame Coveytyse,  
 For she shal fonde,<sup>11</sup> on alle wyse,<sup>12</sup>  
 20 To wynne hors and harnyse.  
 And gyt shal he make sum robbery,  
 Or bygyle hys hoste þer<sup>18</sup> he shal lye.<sup>14</sup>  
 Glotonye also ys hem among,  
 Delycyus metes<sup>15</sup> to make hem strong,  
 25 And drynke þe wyne þat he were lyght,  
 Wyþ glotonye to make hym wyght.<sup>16</sup>  
 3yt ys þere Dame Lecherye;  
 Of here<sup>17</sup> cumþ alle here<sup>18</sup> maystrye.  
 Many tymes, for wymmen sake,  
 30 Knyghteys tournamentys make;  
 And whan he wendyþ to þe tournament

<sup>1</sup> boast, vaunt<sup>2</sup> urging on<sup>3</sup> vanity, ostentation<sup>4</sup> wonderful deeds<sup>5</sup> anger<sup>6</sup> forsake, desist from<sup>7</sup> bit<sup>8</sup> sloth<sup>9</sup> in this pursuit<sup>10</sup> forgotten<sup>11</sup> try<sup>12</sup> by every means<sup>13</sup> where<sup>14</sup> spend the night<sup>15</sup> viands<sup>16</sup> courageous<sup>17</sup> her<sup>18</sup> their

She sendyþ hym sum pryvy<sup>1</sup> present,  
 And byt<sup>2</sup> hym do for hys lemman  
 Yn vasshelage<sup>3</sup> alle þat he kan ;  
 So ys he bete<sup>4</sup> þere, for here love,  
 þat he ne may sytte hys hors above, 5  
 þat peraventure, yn alle hys lyve,  
 Shal he never aftyr pryve.

## BISHOP GROSSETESTE OF LINCOLN

Y shall ȝow telle, as Y have herd,  
 Of þe bysshope Seynt Roberd<sup>5</sup> ;  
 Hys toname<sup>6</sup> ys Grostest 10  
 Of Lynkolne, so seyþ þe gest.<sup>7</sup>  
 He loved moche to here þe harpe,  
 For mannys wytte hyt makyþ sharpe.  
 Next hys chaumbre, besyde hys stody,  
 Hys harpers chaumbre was fast þerby ; 15  
 Many tymes, be nyȝtys and dayys,  
 He had solace of notes<sup>8</sup> and layys.  
 One asked hym onys<sup>9</sup> resun why  
 He had delyte yn mynstralsy ;  
 He answerede hym on þys manere, 20  
 Why he helde þe harper so dere :  
 ' Þe vertu of þe harpe, þurgh skylle and ryȝt,  
 Wyl destroye þe fendes myȝt,  
 And to þe croys by gode skylle  
 Ys þe harpe lykened weyle. 25  
 Anoper poynt cumforteth me :  
 þat God haþ sent unto a tre  
 So moche joye to here with eere ;  
 Moche þan more joye ys þere  
 With God hymselfe, þere he wonys.<sup>10</sup> 30

<sup>1</sup> secret<sup>2</sup> bids<sup>3</sup> prowess<sup>4</sup> beaten, smitten<sup>5</sup> Robert<sup>6</sup> surname, nickname<sup>7</sup> romance, tale<sup>8</sup> melodies, songs<sup>9</sup> once<sup>10</sup> where he dwells

þe harpe þerof me ofte mones <sup>1</sup>  
 Of þe joye and of þe blys  
 Where God hymself wonys and ys.  
 þarefor, gode men, ȝe shul lere, <sup>2</sup>  
 5 Whan ȝe any glemen here,  
 To wurschep God at <sup>3</sup> ȝoure powere,  
 As Davyd seyþ yn þe Sautere <sup>4</sup>:  
 " Yn harpe, yn thabour, and symphan gle, <sup>6</sup>  
 Wurschepe God; yn troumpes, <sup>6</sup> and sautre, <sup>7</sup>  
 10 Yn cordys, <sup>8</sup> an organes, and bellys ryngyng,  
 Yn al þese, wurschepe ȝe hevene Kyng. <sup>9</sup> " "

QUIET IN CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD DURING THE  
TIME OF SERVICE

Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour-games, <sup>10</sup>  
 Whoso ever haunteþ any swyche <sup>11</sup> shames <sup>12</sup>  
 Yn cherche oper yn chercheȝerd,  
 15 Of sacrylage he may be aferd;  
 Or entyrludes, or syngyng,  
 Or tabure bete, <sup>13</sup> or oper pypynge,  
 Alle swyche þyng forbodyn es  
 Whyle þe prest stondeþ at messe.  
 20 Alle swyche to every gode preste ys lothe,  
 And sunner wyl he make hym wroth  
 þan he wyl þat haþ no wyt,  
 Ne undyrstondeþ nat Holy Wryt;  
 And specyaly, at hyghe tymes,  
 25 Karolles to synge, and rede rymys,  
 Noght yn none holy stedes, <sup>14</sup>  
 þat mygt dysturble þe prestes bedes, <sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> reminds<sup>2</sup> learn<sup>3</sup> according to<sup>4</sup> psalter<sup>6</sup> music of the symphony (instrument like the tabor)<sup>6</sup> trumpets<sup>7</sup> psaltery<sup>8</sup> chords (strings of a musical instrument)<sup>9</sup> Ps. 150. 3-5<sup>10</sup> summer-games<sup>11</sup> such<sup>12</sup> disgraceful doings<sup>13</sup> beating<sup>14</sup> places<sup>15</sup> devotions

Or ȝyf he were yn orysun,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or any ouȝer devocyun,  
 Sacrylage ys alle hyt tolde.<sup>2</sup>

## THE TALE OF THE MINER

Þyr was a man begunde þe see  
 A mynour, woned <sup>3</sup> yn a cyte. 5  
 (Mynurs, þey make yn hyllys holes,  
 As yn þe West Cuntre men seke coles.)  
 Þys mynur sogte stones undyr þe molde,<sup>4</sup>  
 Þat men make of <sup>5</sup> sylver and golde ;  
 He wroȝt on a day, and holed <sup>6</sup> yn þe hyl ; 10  
 A perylous chaunce to hym fyl,<sup>7</sup>  
 For a grete party <sup>8</sup> of þat yche <sup>9</sup> myne  
 Fyl dowun yn þe hole, and closed hym ynne.  
 Hys felaus alle, þat were hym hende,<sup>10</sup>  
 Þat he were dede weyl soþely wende ; 15  
 Þey ȝede <sup>11</sup> and toke hem alle to rede,<sup>12</sup>  
 And tolde hys wyfe þat he was dede.     ●  
 Þys womman pleyned <sup>13</sup> here husbonde sore —  
 Wulde God þat many swyche wommen wore ! — 20  
 She hylpe hys soule yn alle þyng,  
 In almesdede, and yn offryng ;  
 She offred for hym to þe auter,  
 Ful of wyne, a pecher,<sup>14</sup>  
 And a feyre lofe withalle,  
 Every day as for a pryncypalle,<sup>15</sup> 25  
 Alle þat twelvemoneȝ stabely,<sup>16</sup>  
 But o <sup>17</sup> day þat passed forby.  
 Fewe swyche wymmen now we fynde,

<sup>1</sup> prayer, supplication<sup>2</sup> counted, considered<sup>3</sup> who dwelt<sup>4</sup> earth<sup>5</sup> from which are made<sup>6</sup> dug<sup>7</sup> befel<sup>8</sup> part<sup>9</sup> same<sup>10</sup> kindly disposed<sup>11</sup> went<sup>12</sup> took counsel all together<sup>13</sup> lamented, bewailed<sup>14</sup> pitcher<sup>15</sup> ?<sup>16</sup> regularly<sup>17</sup> one

þat to here husbondes are so kynde.  
 But þys wyfe, at <sup>1</sup> alle here mygt,  
 Ded for hym boþe day and nygt.  
 Fyl hyt at þe twelvemoneþ ende,  
 5 Hys felaws to þe mounteyne gun wende,  
 And come to þe same stede eftē  
 Þere þey last here werk ilefte,  
 Rygt þere þey fyrst bygan,  
 And perced þurgh unto þys man.  
 10 Þe man yn gode state þey fonde,  
 Lyvyng withoute wem <sup>2</sup> or wounde.  
 Everych one þey hadde grete ferly,<sup>3</sup>  
 And þat was grete resun why  
 Alle þo men were yn grete were <sup>4</sup>  
 15 How he had lyved alle þat zere.  
 But he tolde hem everych one  
 How he hadde lyved þere alone :  
 ' Y have lyved gracyous lyfe  
 Þurgh þe curtesye of my wyfe,  
 20 For every day she haþ me sent  
 Brede and wyne to <sup>5</sup> present ;  
 But o day certys ete Y nogt,  
 For no mete <sup>6</sup> was to me brogt.'  
 Þey led þys man unto þe tounne,  
 25 And tolde þys myracle up and dounne,  
 Fyrst þurogh þe cyte,  
 And seþþe <sup>7</sup> þurogh þe cuntre.  
 Þey asked hym, at þe laste,  
 Þat day þat he dyde faste ;  
 30 He tolde hem þe dayes name,  
 And hys wyfe seyð þe same ;  
 Þat day she offred never a deyl <sup>8</sup> —  
 Þe Gode Fryday he mygt be weyl.

<sup>1</sup> with<sup>2</sup> harm, injury<sup>3</sup> wonder, astonishment<sup>4</sup> doubt, uncertainty<sup>5</sup> as a<sup>6</sup> food<sup>7</sup> afterwards<sup>8</sup> bit

Now mow<sup>1</sup> ȝe here þat almesdede  
 Gostely<sup>2</sup> a man wyl fede,  
 And so mow ȝe weyl undyrstande  
 Þat God ys payd of<sup>3</sup> gode offrande.

But for alle þys tale, yn ȝoure lyves,  
 Truste ȝe nat moche on ȝoure wyves,  
 Ne on ȝoure chyldryn, for no þyng,  
 But makeþ ȝeself<sup>4</sup> ȝoure offryng,  
 For so kynde a womman as Y of tolde  
 Lyveþ nat now, be þou bolde<sup>5</sup>;  
 Ne no clerk, þat þys ryme redys,  
 Shal fynde a womman of so kynde dedes.

5

10

## THE BOOK OF THE KNIGHT OF LA TOUR-LANDRY

Among the numerous instruction-books of the Middle Ages was one known as *Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour-Landry pour l'Enseignement de ses Filles*, a series of tales written (collected, rather) in 1371-1372 for his motherless daughters by Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry, a nobleman of Anjou. A similar book written for his sons has disappeared entirely, but this for the daughters was frequently copied — about a dozen manuscript copies being still in existence. A German translation of the work was printed toward the end of the fifteenth century, and an English translation by Caxton in 1484.

Our selections are taken from the Early English Text Society's print (No. 33, ed. Wright, 1868; revised ed., 1906) of MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 1764, assigned to the reign of Henry VI (1422-1461). This translation, by an unknown hand, is much less literal than Caxton's (cf. Wright's introduction). The selections are from pages 1-4, 22, 26-8, and 39-40 of the edition of 1906. The words in brackets are supplied from Caxton's edition.

### PROLOGUE

In the yere of the incarnation of oure Lord MCCCLXXI, as Y was in a gardin, al hevi and full of thought, in the shadow, about the ende of the monthe of April, but a litell Y rejoyced me of the melodie and  
 song of the wilde briddes. Thei sang there in her<sup>6</sup> langages, as the  
 thrustill, the thrusshe, the nytingale, and other briddes, the whiche

15

<sup>1</sup> may  
<sup>2</sup> spiritually

<sup>3</sup> pleased with  
<sup>4</sup> yourself

<sup>5</sup> assured  
<sup>6</sup> their

were full of mirthe and joye; and thaire suete songe made my herte to lighten, and made me to thinke of the tyme that is passed of my youthe, how love in gret distresse had holde me, and how Y was in her service mani tyme full of sorugh and gladnesse, as mani lovers  
 5 ben. But my sorw was heled, and my service wel ysette<sup>1</sup> and quitte, for he gave [me a fayr] wyff, and . . .<sup>2</sup> that was bothe faire and good, [whiche had knowleche of alle honoure, alle good, and fayre mayntenynge,<sup>3</sup>] and of all good she was bell<sup>4</sup> and the floure; and Y delited me so moche in her that Y made for her love-songges, balades,  
 10 rondelles, viralles,<sup>5</sup> and diverse nwe thinges in the best wise that Y couthe. . . . And as Y was in the saide gardein, thinkynge of these thoughtz, Y sawe come towardes me my iii doughters, of the whiche I was joyfull, and had grete desire that thei shuld turne to good and worshipe above all ertheli thinges, for thei were yonge, and had but  
 15 tendir witte; and so atte the begynnyng a man aught to lerne<sup>6</sup> his doughters with good ensaumples yevinge, as dede the Quene Proues of Hongrie, that faire and goodly chastised<sup>7</sup> and taught her doughters, as it [is] contened in her boke. . . . And Y said to hem that Y wolde make a boke of ensaumples, for to teche my doughtres, that thei  
 20 might understond how thei shulde governe hem, and knowe good from evell. And so Y made hem extraie<sup>8</sup> me ensaumples of the Bible and other bokes that Y had, as the gestis<sup>9</sup> of kingges, the croniclez of Fraunce, Grece, of Ingland, and of mani other straunge londes. And Y made hem rede me everi boke; and ther that Y fonde a good  
 25 ensauple, Y made extraie it oute. And thanne Y made this boke. But Y wolde not sette it in ryme, but in prose, for to abregge<sup>10</sup> it, and that it might be beter and more plainly to be understond. And Y made this boke for the gret love that Y had to my said doughtres, the whiche Y loved as fader aught to love his child, having hertely  
 30 joye to finde wayes to stere and turne hem to goodnesse and worshippe, and to love and serve her<sup>11</sup> Creatoure, and to have love of her neighbours and of the world. And therfor all faders and moders, after good nature,<sup>12</sup> aught to teche her children to leve all wrong and

<sup>1</sup> bestowed<sup>2</sup> MS. illegible<sup>3</sup> deportment<sup>4</sup> bore the bell<sup>5</sup> virelays<sup>6</sup> teach<sup>7</sup> corrected<sup>8</sup> extract<sup>9</sup> tales<sup>10</sup> abridge, shorten<sup>11</sup> their<sup>12</sup> in the kindness of their hearts



evell waies, and shew hem the true right weye, as wele for the salvacion of the soule as for the worshipec of the worldely bodi. And therfor Y have made ii bokes, one for my sones, another for my doughtres, for to lerne hem to rede. And in reding, it may not be but that thei shall kepe with hem som good ensaumple for to flee evell, and withholde the good. 5 For it shall not be posible but sumtyme thei shall have mynde on sum good ensaumple, sum good doctrine of this boke, whanne thei knowe or here speke hereafter, as thei fall in the rewe<sup>1</sup> upon sum spekers of suche matiers.

## THE STORY OF THE MAGPIE

Ther was a woman that had a pie<sup>2</sup> in a cage, that spake and wolde 10 tell talys that she saw do. And so it happed that her husbonde made kepe<sup>3</sup> a gret ele in a litell ponde in his gardin, to that entent to yeve it sum of his frendes that wolde come to see hym; but the wyff, whanne her husbond was oute, saide to her maide: 'Late us ete the gret ele, and Y will saie to my husbond that the otour<sup>4</sup> hathe eten 15 hym;' and so it was done. And whan the good man was come, the pye began to tell hym how her maistresse had eten the ele. And he yode<sup>5</sup> to the ponde, and fonde not the ele. And he asked his wiff wher the ele was become.<sup>6</sup> And she wende to have excused her, but he saide her: 'Excuse you not, for Y wote well ye have eten yt, for 20 the pye hathe told me.' And so ther was gret noyse<sup>7</sup> betwene the man and hys wiff for etinge of the ele. But whanne the good man was gone, the maistresse and the maide come to the pie, and plucked of all the fedres on the pyes hede, saieng: 'Thou hast discovered<sup>8</sup> us of the ele'; and thus was the pore pye plucked. But ever after, 25 whanne the pie sawe a balled or a pilled<sup>9</sup> man, or a woman with an high forhede, the pie saide to hem: 'Ye spake of the ele.' And therfor here is an ensaumple that no woman shulde ete no lycorous<sup>10</sup> morcelles in the absens and withoute weteng<sup>11</sup> of her husbond, but yef it so were that it be with folk of worshipec, to make hem chere<sup>12</sup>; 30 for this woman was afterward mocked for the pye and the ele.

<sup>1</sup> successively<sup>2</sup> magpie<sup>3</sup> caused to be kept<sup>4</sup> otter<sup>5</sup> went<sup>6</sup> what had become of the eel<sup>7</sup> disturbance<sup>8</sup> betrayed<sup>9</sup> with hair removed<sup>10</sup> dainty<sup>11</sup> knowledge<sup>12</sup> entertainment

## THE STORY OF THE OBEDIENT WIFE

Hit happed onis there were iii marchauntes that yede<sup>1</sup> homwarde from a faiere, and as thei fell in talkinge, ridyng on the waye, one of hem saide: 'It is a noble thinge a man to have a good wiff that obeiethe and dothe his biddinge atte all tymes.' 'Be my trouthe,'  
 5 saide that other, 'my wiff obeiethe me truly.' 'Be God,' saide that other, 'Y trowe myn obeieth best to her husbonde.' Thanne he that beganne furst to speke saide: 'Lete<sup>2</sup> leye a wager of a denar,<sup>3</sup> and whos wiff that obeiethe worst, lete her husbonde paie for the denar'; and thus the wager was leyde. And thei ordeined amonges hem how  
 10 thei shulde saie<sup>4</sup> her wyfes, for thei ordeined that everi man shulde bidde his wyff lepe into a basin that thei shulde sette afore her, and they were suoren that none shulde late his wiff have weting<sup>5</sup> of her wager, save only thei shulde saye: 'Lokithe,<sup>6</sup> wiff, that Y comaunde be done.' However it be, after one of hem bade his wiff lepe into the  
 15 basin that he had sette afore her on the grounde, and she answered and axed wherto,<sup>7</sup> and he saide: 'For it is myn luste,<sup>8</sup> and Y will ye do it.' 'Be God,' quod she, 'Y will furst wete<sup>9</sup> wherto ye will have me lepe into the basin.' And for nothinge her husbond coude do she wolde not do it. So her husbonde up with his fust,<sup>10</sup> and gave her ii  
 20 or iii gret strokes; and thanne yede thei to the secounde marchauntys hous, and he comaunded that whatever he bade do it shulde be do, but it was not longe after but he bade his wiff lepe into the basin that was afore her on the flore, and she asked wherto, and she saide she wolde not for hym. And thanne he toke a staffe, and al tobete<sup>11</sup> her.  
 25 And thanne thei yode to the thridde marchauntes hous, and there thei fonde the mete on the borde, and he rowned<sup>12</sup> in one of his felawes heres, and saide: 'After dyner Y will assaie my wiff, and bidde her lepe into the basin.' And so thei sette hem to her<sup>13</sup> dyner. And whan thei were sette, the good man saide to his wiff: 'Whatever Y bidde,  
 30 loke it be done, however it be.' And she that loved hym, and dredde

<sup>1</sup> went<sup>2</sup> let us<sup>3</sup> dinner<sup>4</sup> assay, try<sup>5</sup> knowledge<sup>6</sup> see to it<sup>7</sup> for what purpose<sup>8</sup> desire<sup>9</sup> know<sup>10</sup> fist<sup>11</sup> beat severely<sup>12</sup> whispered<sup>13</sup> their

hym, herde what he saide, and toke hede to that worde, but she wost<sup>1</sup> not what he ment. But it happed that thei had atte her dyner rere<sup>2</sup> eggis, and there lacked salt on the borde, and the good man saide: 'Wiff, sele sus table,' and the wiff understode that her husbonde had saide: 'Seyle sus table,' the whiche is in Frenshe: 'Lepe on the borde.' <sup>5</sup> And she, that was aferde to disobeie, lepte upon the borde, and threw down mete and drinke, and brake the verres,<sup>3</sup> and spilt all that there was on the borde. 'What,' saide the good man, 'thanne canne<sup>4</sup> ye none other plaie, wiff?' 'Be ye wode,<sup>5</sup> sir,' she saide, 'Y have do youre biddinge, as ye bade me to my power, notwithstandinge it is <sup>10</sup> youre harme and myn; but Y had lever ye had harme and Y bothe, thanne Y disobeied youre biddinge; for ye saide: "Seyle sus table." 'Nay,' quod he, 'Y saide: "Sele sus table," that is to saie, "Salt on the borde."' 'Bi my trouthe,' she saide, 'Y understode that ye bade me lepe on the borde,' and there was moche mirthe and laughinge. And <sup>15</sup> the other two marchauntes saide it was no nede to bidde her lepe into the basin, for she obeied ynough; wherthorugh<sup>6</sup> thei consented that her husbond had wonne the wager, and thei had lost bothe. And after<sup>7</sup> she was gretly preised for her obeisaunce to her husbonde, and she was not bete as were that other ii wyves that wolde not do her <sup>20</sup> husbondes comaundement.

#### HOW ST. BERNARD'S SISTER WAS LED AWAY FROM VANITIES

Hit befell that Seint Bernarde, that was an holy man and of gret richesse and birth, lefte all his possessiones and good, and yede to serve God in an abbey; and for his holy lyving, and weringe<sup>8</sup> of the heyre, and doinge gret abstinence and almesdedes, made<sup>9</sup> that <sup>25</sup> he was chose to be abbot of that place. And he hadd a gret ladi to his suster, that come to see hym withe gret meyni,<sup>10</sup> well arraied with riche clothinge, and riche atyred of perles and presious stones. And in this array she come afore her brother, Seint Bernard. And whanne

<sup>1</sup> knew<sup>2</sup> underdone<sup>3</sup> glasses<sup>4</sup> know<sup>5</sup> mad<sup>6</sup> wherefore<sup>7</sup> afterwards<sup>8</sup> MS. of weringe<sup>9</sup> brought it about<sup>10</sup> retinue

he sawe her in that array, he turned to her his backe and blessed<sup>1</sup> hym, and the lady was ashamed, and asked whi he ne wolde with her speke. And he saide that he had gret pitee to see her so disgisid, and in that pride that she was inne. And she dede of<sup>2</sup> her riche  
 5 atyre and gay clothes, and toke other symple arrayc. And he saide: 'Suster, yef Y love youre bodi, by reson Y shuld beter love youre sowle. Wene ye not that ye displese God and his aungells to see in you suche pompe and pride, to aorne<sup>3</sup> suche a carion as is youre body, whiche withinne vii dayes that<sup>4</sup> the soule ys parted from the body, he  
 10 saverithe<sup>5</sup> in suche wise that no creatoure may suffre to be nigh it or see it, with[out] gret abhominacion? Faire suster, whi thenke ye not of<sup>6</sup> the pore peple that deyen for hungir and colde, that for the sixte part of youre gay arraye xl persones might be clothed, refresshed, and kepte from the colde?' And thus Bernarde declared the foly and the  
 15 pompe of the worlde to his suster, and also the savement of her soule. And thanne the ladi wepte, and solde away her clothes, and levid after an holy lyff, and had love of God, aungeles, and holy seintez, the whiche is beter thanne of the worldly pepill.

### GESTA ROMANORUM: THE MAGIC IMAGE

The *Gesta Romanorum* is a series of mediæval tales and their morals, originally written in Latin, and widely used for further artistic development or for illustrative material by the writers and preachers of the later Middle Ages. In the collection are versions of the tale of Constance which Chaucer tells in his *Man of Law's Tale*, of Shakespeare's bond- and casket-incidents in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of the Lear story; and many less-known tales appear in later poems and ballads. The date, authorship, and origin of the series are doubtful; for discussions of them see the Latin version, ed. Oesterley, 1872, revised 1877, and the Early English Text Society's reprint of the Middle English versions (ed. Herrtage, 1879; Ex. Ser. 33). Cf. also Swan's translation of the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* in the Bohn Library.

The following selection is from Herrtage's reprint of MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 7333, and is No. 3 of the series of tales (pp. 7-8). The Middle English versions (3 manuscripts) are all dated in the reign of Henry VI (1422-1461).

Our story has been versified by William Morris as *The Writing on the Image*, in *The Earthly Paradise*.

<sup>1</sup> made the sign of the cross

<sup>2</sup> took off

<sup>3</sup> adorn

<sup>4</sup> from the time when

<sup>5</sup> it has an odor

<sup>6</sup> MS. that

Deoclician was emperour in þe cite of Rome, in þe empire of whom was a philosophre, callid Lenoppus, þe which had bi his crafte sette up an ymage, þe which put out an hond with a fynger, and upon the finger was wretyn wordis, *Percute hic*, that is to say, 'Smite here.' This ymage stode þer long, and many a day after þe deth of þe philosopher; and many come to þis finger, and radde the superscripcion, but þey undirstode it not, and therfore þei hadde moch marvaile what it shuld mene. So in a certeyne tyme þer com a clerke of ferr con- 5 treys, and ofte tymis he sawe þis ymage, and þis finger with þe scripture.<sup>1</sup> And in a certeyne day he toke a shovill, and dyggyd in the 10 erth, undir þe superscripcion. And anon he fond a hous of marbill undir þe erth; and thanne he went down, and enterid into the hall, and þer he fond so many riche jewelis and marvelous þingys, that no tunge cowde tell. Aftir þis he sawe a bord or a table, isprad with rich metys ynowe þeruppon. Thenne he lokid afer,<sup>2</sup> and sawe stonding a 15 charbuncle ston, the which ȝaf liȝt over all the hous; and aȝenst hit stod a man, with a bowe in his hond, redy for to schete. This clerke perceivid well this sight, and þou[ȝ]te, þoȝ I tell þis sigt<sup>3</sup> whenne I am ago<sup>4</sup> hens, no man woll trowe<sup>5</sup> me, and þerfore I woll take som of þis goode in tokne. He stirte to þe bord, and tooke a faire gilt cowpe, 20 and put it up; and anoon the man with þe bowe sheet to the charbuncle ston so soore that it ȝede<sup>6</sup> onsundre, and þo was all the liȝt agon, and þe hous was full of dorknesse. And whenne þe clerke sawe þis, he wepte soore, for he wiste not how to passe out, for dorknesse. And þerfore he dwelte þer still, and þer he endyd his lif, etc. 25

*Moralite.* Goode men, þis ymage that is thus ypaynt<sup>7</sup> is the devell, þe which seith evermore: *Percute hic*, 'Smyte here,' that is to sey, he puttith in our hertes erthely thingis, and biddith us take hem, but he woll never speke of hevinly thingis. The clerke þat smytith with the shovill bitokenyth þe wise men of þis wordle,<sup>8</sup> and ben advocatis and 30 pletouris,<sup>9</sup> þe which by sotilte and wickidnesse getith þe goode of þis wordle, and þe vanyteys of þis wordle. And whenne thei have geten hem with such worching, they fyndith many marveilous þingis, þat is

<sup>1</sup> inscription, writing<sup>2</sup> afar<sup>3</sup> MS. sigth<sup>4</sup> gone<sup>5</sup> believe<sup>6</sup> parted<sup>7</sup> painted<sup>8</sup> world<sup>9</sup> pleaders

to sey, dilectabill þingis of þe wordle, in þe which þei have gret dilectation. The charbuncle ston þat ȝevith lȝt is þe yowth of man, þe which ȝevith to man hardinesse to have dilectacion and liking of <sup>1</sup> wordly <sup>2</sup> þingis. The archer þat shetith is deth, þe which stondith evermore  
 5 redy in awaite, <sup>3</sup> for to shete his dart. Now the clerke þanne takith a knyfe — what is that? The wordly man, trowing to have all thingis at his owne will. But in that trust the archer shetith att þe charbuncle ston, that is to sey, deth shetith his schotys to þe ȝowth of man, and smytith his strength <sup>4</sup> and his mygte; and þenne lieth the yowth in  
 10 derkenesse of synne, in the which derkenesse many men oftyn tyme deyeth. And þefore lat us fle all lustys and all likingys, and þenne we schull not faile of everlasting lȝt, *ad quam nos perducatur*, etc.

### THE BESTIARY

The *Bestiary*, or *Physiologus*, had a history of something like a thousand years before it entered Middle English, which it did as a translation from the Latin of a certain Theobaldus; his work had been already rendered into French by Philippe de Thaon, who dedicated his version to Adela, second wife (1121) of Henry I of England. The Middle English version belongs to ca. 1220.

The two subjects dealt with below — the Whale (Turtle) and the Panther — are also treated in Old English poetry (see my edition of the Old English *Elene*, *Phoenix*, and *Physiologus* (New Haven, 1919), where a much fuller account is given, with references to the bibliography of the subject).

Our text is derived from Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1. 55–75), which in turn reproduces Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 1. 208–27. Emendations are by Mätzner, and (of the *Whale*) by Emerson (*Middle English Reader*); others are mine.

### THE WHALE (TURTLE)

Cethegrande <sup>5</sup> is a fis, <sup>6</sup>  
 Ðe moste <sup>7</sup> ðat in water is;  
 Ðat tu wuldes seien <sup>8</sup> get,  
 Gef ðu it soge <sup>9</sup> wan it flet, <sup>10</sup>

1 MS. the  
 2 worldly  
 3 waiting  
 4 MS. strenght

5 whale (*properly*, turtle)  
 6 fish  
 7 largest  
 8 say

9 saw  
 10 floated

Ðat it were an eilond <sup>1</sup>  
 Ðat sete <sup>2</sup> on <sup>3</sup> ðe se-sonð. <sup>4</sup>  
 Ðis fis ðat is unríde, <sup>5</sup>  
 Ðanne him hungreð, he gapeð wide;  
 Ut of his ðrote it smit <sup>6</sup> an onðe, <sup>7</sup> 5  
 Ðe swettete ðing ðat is o londe.  
 Ðerfore oðre fisses to him dragen <sup>8</sup>;  
 Wan he it felen he aren fagen <sup>9</sup>;  
 He cumen and hoven <sup>10</sup> in his muð;  
 Of his swike <sup>11</sup> he arn uncuð. <sup>12</sup> 10  
 Ðis cete <sup>13</sup> ðanne hise chaweles <sup>14</sup> lukeð, <sup>15</sup>  
 Ðise fisses alle in sukeð;  
 Ðe smale he wile ðus biswiken, <sup>16</sup>  
 Ðe grete maig he nogt bigripen. <sup>17</sup>  
 Ðis fis wuneð wið ðe se-grund, <sup>18</sup> 15  
 And liveð ðer evre heil and sund, <sup>19</sup>  
 Til it cumeð ðe time  
 Ðat storm stireð al ðe se,  
 Ðanne sumer and winter winnen. <sup>20</sup>  
 Ne mai it wunen ðerinne[n], 20  
 So drovi <sup>21</sup> is te sees grund,  
 Ne mai he wunen ðer ðat stund, <sup>22</sup>  
 Oc stireð up <sup>23</sup> and hoveð stille.  
 Wiles <sup>24</sup> ðat <sup>25</sup> weder is so ille,  
 Ðe sipes <sup>26</sup> ðat arn on se fordriven <sup>27</sup> — 25  
 Loð hem is deð, <sup>28</sup> and lef <sup>29</sup> to liven —  
 Biloken <sup>30</sup> hem, and sen ðis fis;  
 An eilond he wenen <sup>31</sup> it is.

<sup>1</sup> island<sup>2</sup> sat<sup>3</sup> MS. one (em. E.)<sup>4</sup> sea-sand (nom.)<sup>5</sup> unwieldy, bulky<sup>6</sup> emits<sup>7</sup> breath<sup>8</sup> draw near<sup>9</sup> glad<sup>10</sup> abide<sup>11</sup> trickery<sup>12</sup> ignorant<sup>13</sup> sea-monster<sup>14</sup> jaws<sup>15</sup> shuts<sup>16</sup> deceive<sup>17</sup> seize, get hold of<sup>18</sup> dwells near the bottom of  
the sea<sup>19</sup> well and sound<sup>20</sup> contend<sup>21</sup> turbid<sup>22</sup> at that time<sup>23</sup> rises<sup>24</sup> while<sup>25</sup> MS. ðar (em. E.)<sup>26</sup> ships<sup>27</sup> driven about<sup>28</sup> MS. ded (em. E.)<sup>29</sup> dear, pleasant<sup>30</sup> look about<sup>31</sup> they suppose

- Derof he aren swiðe fagen,  
 And mid here migt ðarto he dragen  
 Sipes on festen,<sup>1</sup>  
 And alle up gangen,  
 5 Of ston mid stel in ðe tunder <sup>2</sup>  
 Wel to brennen <sup>3</sup> on <sup>4</sup> ðis wunder,  
 Warmen hem wel, and eten <sup>5</sup> and drinken.  
 Ðe fir he feleð, and doð <sup>6</sup> hem sinken,  
 For sone he diveð dun to grunde;  
 10 He drepeð <sup>7</sup> hem alle wiðuten wunde.  
*Significacio.* Ðis devel is mikel wið wil and magt  
 (So <sup>8</sup> wicches <sup>9</sup> haven in here craft);  
 He doð men hungren, and haven ðrist,<sup>10</sup>  
 And mani oðer sinful list,<sup>11</sup>  
 15 Tolleð <sup>12</sup> men to him wið his onde,  
 Woso him folegeð,<sup>13</sup> he findeð sonde.<sup>14</sup>  
 Ðo arn ðe little in <sup>15</sup> leve <sup>16</sup> lage <sup>17</sup>;  
 Ðe mikle ne maig he to him dragen —  
 Ðe mikle, I mene ðe stedefast  
 20 In rigte leve mid fles <sup>18</sup> and gast.  
 Woso listneð develes lore,  
 On lengðe it sal him rewen <sup>19</sup> sore;  
 Woso festeð <sup>20</sup> hope on him,  
 He sal him folgen to helle dim.

<sup>1</sup> with reference to fasten-  
ing, for the purpose of  
anchoring

<sup>2</sup> tinder

<sup>3</sup> make a fire

<sup>4</sup> MS. one (em. E.)

<sup>5</sup> MS. heten (em. E.)

<sup>6</sup> causes

<sup>7</sup> slays

<sup>8</sup> such as

<sup>9</sup> enchanters; MS. witches  
(em. E.)

<sup>10</sup> thirst

<sup>11</sup> pleasure

<sup>12</sup> draw; MS. colleð (em. E.)

<sup>13</sup> follows; MS. folgeð (em.  
E.)

<sup>14</sup> shame

<sup>15</sup> (who are) in

<sup>16</sup> faith

<sup>17</sup> low

<sup>18</sup> body

<sup>19</sup> rue; MS. rewen (em.  
E.)

<sup>20</sup> fasteneth (alluding to  
the anchorage and  
landing)



## THE PANTHER

Panter is an wilde der,  
 Is non fairere on werlde her ;  
 He is blac so bon <sup>1</sup> of qual,<sup>2</sup>  
 Mid <sup>3</sup> wite spottes sapen <sup>4</sup> al,  
 Wit, and trendled <sup>5</sup> als a wel,<sup>6</sup> 5  
 And it <sup>7</sup> bicumeð him swiðe wel.  
 Worso he wuneð, ðis panter,  
 He fedeð him al mid oðer der ;  
 Of ðo ðe he wile he nimeð ðe cul,<sup>8</sup>  
 And fet him <sup>9</sup> wei til he is ful. 10  
 In his hole siðen <sup>10</sup> stille  
 Ðre dages he slepen wille ;  
 Ðan after ðe ðridde dai  
 He riseð and remeð <sup>11</sup> lude so <sup>12</sup> he mai.  
 Ut of his ðrote cumeð a smel 15  
 Mid his rem forð over al,  
 Ðat overcumeth haliweie <sup>13</sup>  
 Wið swetnesse, Ic gu <sup>14</sup> seie ;  
 And al ðat evre smelleð swete,  
 Be it drie, be it wete. 20  
 For ðe swetnesse off his onde,  
 Worso <sup>15</sup> he walkeð o londe,  
 Worso he walkeð,<sup>16</sup> er worso he wuneð,<sup>17</sup>  
 Ilk der ðe him hereð to him cumeð,  
 And folegeð him upon <sup>18</sup> ðe wold, 25  
 For ðe swetnesse ðe Ic gu have told.  
 Ðe dragunes one <sup>19</sup> ne stiren nout  
 Wiles <sup>20</sup> te panter rameð ogt,<sup>21</sup>

<sup>1</sup> bone ; MS. bro  
<sup>2</sup> whale  
<sup>3</sup> MS. mið  
<sup>4</sup> fashioned  
<sup>5</sup> round  
<sup>6</sup> wheel  
<sup>7</sup> MS. itt (em. M.)

<sup>8</sup> choice, best  
<sup>9</sup> himself  
<sup>10</sup> afterwards  
<sup>11</sup> roars  
<sup>12</sup> loud as  
<sup>13</sup> balsam  
<sup>14</sup> to you

<sup>15</sup> wheresoever  
<sup>16</sup> MS. walked  
<sup>17</sup> dwells  
<sup>18</sup> MS. upone  
<sup>19</sup> alone  
<sup>20</sup> while  
<sup>21</sup> anything, at all

Oc daren <sup>1</sup> stille in here pit,  
 Als so <sup>2</sup> he weren of deðe <sup>3</sup> offrigt.<sup>4</sup>

*Significacio.* Crist is tokned ðurg ðis der,

Wos kinde <sup>5</sup> we haven told gu her ;

5 For he is faier over alle men,  
 So evensterre over erðe fen <sup>6</sup> ;

Ful wel he taunede <sup>7</sup> his luve to man

Wan he ðurg holi spel him wan ;

And longe he lai her in an hole —

10 Wel him ðat <sup>8</sup> he it wulde ðolen <sup>9</sup> :

Ðre daies slep he al onon,<sup>10</sup>

Ðanne he ded was in blod and bon.

Up he ros, and remede iwis <sup>11</sup> —

Of helle pine, of hevene blis —

15 And steg <sup>12</sup> to hevene uvemest <sup>13</sup> ;

Ðer wuneð wið Fader and Holi Gast.

Amonges men a swete smel <sup>14</sup>

He let herof — his holi spel,<sup>15</sup>

Worðurg we mugen folgen him

20 Into his godcundnesse <sup>16</sup> fin.<sup>17</sup>

And ðat wirm,<sup>18</sup> ure widerwine <sup>19</sup> —

Worso <sup>20</sup> of Godes word is dine <sup>21</sup>

Ne dar he stiren, ne no man deren,<sup>22</sup>

Ðe <sup>23</sup> while he <sup>24</sup> lage <sup>25</sup> and luve beren.

<sup>1</sup> crouch, cower

<sup>2</sup> if

<sup>3</sup> death ; MS. dede

<sup>4</sup> frightened

<sup>5</sup> nature

<sup>6</sup> mire

<sup>7</sup> manifested

<sup>8</sup> MS. dat

<sup>9</sup> endure

<sup>10</sup> uninterruptedly

<sup>11</sup> MS. in wis (em. M.)

<sup>12</sup> ascended

<sup>13</sup> on high ; MS. uvenest (em. M.)

<sup>14</sup> MS. mel. (em. M.)

<sup>15</sup> teaching

<sup>16</sup> divinity's

<sup>17</sup> utmost reach

<sup>18</sup> serpent

<sup>19</sup> adversary

<sup>20</sup> whereso

<sup>21</sup> mention (*lit. din*); MS. ðine

<sup>22</sup> injure

<sup>23</sup> MS. ðer (em. M.)

<sup>24</sup> they

<sup>25</sup> law

## THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

*The Owl and the Nightingale* is the earliest specimen in English of the true contention-poem — a verbal contest for supremacy — analogous to the Latin, French, and Provençal *partimen*, *tenson*, *plait*, *jeu-parti*, etc. Its main subject, after the opening personalities, is joy and æstheticism, represented by the nightingale, as opposed to practicality and seriousness, represented by the owl. In Fritz Reuter's *Hanne Nüte* (Part 9), the sparrow and the nightingale contrast their modes of life :

'Gu'n Abend, Jochen,' seggt sei, 'na?  
Ik bün taurigg ut Afrika.' —  
'Ja,' segg ik, 'süllst di brav wat schämen,  
So in de Welt herüm tau striken,  
Bliw hir bi uns, bi dinesglikén !  
An Lotten kannst en Bispill nemen,  
De brött nu all den tweiten Satz.' —  
Dunn lacht s' un seggt : 'Mein lieber Spatz,  
Dein Lotting ist ein braves Weib,  
Un Essen kochen, Strümpfe knütten,  
Un Junge aus die Eier sitten  
Ist sicher auch ein Zeitvertreib ;  
Doch wir, die in der Poesie  
Die Aufgab' unsres Lebens finnen,  
Wir Künstler und wir Sängerinnen,  
Wir knütten, Jochen, un brüten nie.'

'In a group of poets that were active in the South of England at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the author of *The Owl and the Nightingale* stands preëminent. Of striking vigor and originality of mind, possessing a sane critical judgment founded on a considerable culture, and endowed with astonishing poetical gifts for his time and environment, he produced a composition that seems the earliest, and from many points of view the best, original long poem of a wholly imaginative character written in English before the time of Chaucer' (Wells' ed., p. xxxvii). Elsewhere Wells says : 'Theme and treatment grew out of the poet's own immediate experience. . . . The poem is notable in its period for its embodiment of the distinctly national tone and spirit that were beginning to grow out of the amalgamation of the French and the English, the learned and the popular, in the island.' This author's identity is unknown ; it would seem probable that he is *not* the Nicholas of Guildford chosen by the disputants as judge.

The poem is found in two manuscripts. Our selection (made with the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.) is from John Edwin Wells' reproduction of MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Caligula A. 9, which belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century, with his emendations, and a few of my own. The selection includes lines 1-94, 101-285, 287-348.

- Ich was in one sumere <sup>1</sup> dale,  
 In one supe <sup>2</sup> digele <sup>3</sup> hale,<sup>4</sup>  
 Iherde Ich holde grete tale <sup>5</sup>  
 An hule <sup>6</sup> and one <sup>7</sup> nigtingale.  
 5 þat plait <sup>8</sup> was stif and starc <sup>9</sup> and strong,  
 Sum wile <sup>10</sup> softe and lud <sup>11</sup> among <sup>12</sup>;  
 An <sup>13</sup> aiþer aȝen oþer sval,<sup>14</sup>  
 And let þat wole <sup>15</sup> mod <sup>16</sup> ut al.  
 And eiþer seide of oþeres custe <sup>17</sup>  
 10 þat alreworste <sup>18</sup> þat hi wuste;  
 And hure and hure <sup>19</sup> of oþere[s] songe,  
 Hi holde plaidding <sup>20</sup> supe stronge.  
 þe nigtingale bigon þe speche  
 In one hurne <sup>21</sup> of one beche,<sup>22</sup>  
 15 And sat up[on] one vaire boȝe,<sup>23</sup>  
 þar were abute blosme inoȝe,  
 In ore <sup>24</sup> waste <sup>25</sup> picke hegge,  
 Imeind <sup>26</sup> mid spire <sup>27</sup> and grene segge.  
 Ho <sup>28</sup> was þe gladur vor þe rise,<sup>29</sup>  
 20 And song a vele <sup>30</sup> cunne wise <sup>31</sup>;  
 Bet <sup>32</sup> þuȝte þe dreim <sup>33</sup> þat he were  
 Of harpe and pipe þan he nere,  
 Bet þuȝte þat he were ishote <sup>34</sup>  
 Of harpe and pipe þan of þrote.  
 25 þo stod on old stoc <sup>35</sup> þar biside,  
 þar þo ule song hire tide,<sup>36</sup>

<sup>1</sup> a certain<sup>2</sup> very<sup>3</sup> secluded<sup>4</sup> out of the way spot<sup>5</sup> dispute<sup>6</sup> owl<sup>7</sup> a<sup>8</sup> debate<sup>9</sup> severe, sharp<sup>10</sup> sometimes<sup>11</sup> loud<sup>12</sup> at intervals<sup>13</sup> and<sup>14</sup> grew swollen with wrath<sup>15</sup> evil<sup>16</sup> mood<sup>17</sup> character<sup>18</sup> very worst<sup>19</sup> at all events<sup>20</sup> debate<sup>21</sup> corner, nook<sup>22</sup> valley; MS. breche<sup>23</sup> a fair bough<sup>24</sup> a<sup>25</sup> solitary<sup>26</sup> mingled<sup>27</sup> tall grass<sup>28</sup> she<sup>29</sup> twig, branch<sup>30</sup> in many<sup>31</sup> kinds of ways<sup>32</sup> rather (better); MS. het (em.W.)<sup>33</sup> seemed the music<sup>34</sup> shot, poured forth<sup>35</sup> stump<sup>36</sup> at her time, when her time came

And was mid ivi al bigrowe :  
 Hit was þare hule earding-stowe.<sup>1</sup>  
 Þe niztingale hi isez,<sup>2</sup>  
 And hi bihold and oversez,<sup>3</sup>  
 And þugte wel wl<sup>4</sup> of þare hule, 5  
 For me hi halt<sup>5</sup> lodlich and fule.<sup>6</sup>  
 'Unwigt,<sup>7</sup> ho sede, 'awei þu flo<sup>8</sup> !  
 Me is þe wrs<sup>9</sup> þat Ich þe so.<sup>10</sup>  
 Iwis for þine wle<sup>11</sup> lete<sup>12</sup>  
 Wel oft Ich mine song forlete<sup>13</sup> ; 10  
 Min horte atflip,<sup>14</sup> and falt<sup>15</sup> mi tonge,  
 Wonne þu art to me iprunge.<sup>16</sup>  
 Me luste bet speten<sup>17</sup> þane singe,  
 Of<sup>18</sup> pine fule zogeling.<sup>19</sup> '  
 Þos<sup>20</sup> hule abod fort<sup>21</sup> hit was eve, 15  
 Ho ne mizte no leng<sup>22</sup> bileve,<sup>23</sup>  
 Vor hire horte was so gret  
 Þat wel nez hire fnast<sup>24</sup> atschet,<sup>25</sup>  
 And warp<sup>26</sup> a word<sup>27</sup> þarafter longe :  
 'Hu þinc[þ] þe<sup>28</sup> nu bi mine songe ? 20  
 We[n]st þu<sup>29</sup> þat Ich ne cunne singe,  
 Þez Ich ne cunne of writelinge<sup>30</sup> ?  
 [Oft and] ilome<sup>31</sup> þu dest me grame,<sup>32</sup>  
 And seist me boþe tone<sup>33</sup> and schame.  
 3if Ich þe holde on mine vote<sup>34</sup> — 25  
 So hit bitide<sup>35</sup> þat Ich mote ! —

1 the owl's dwelling-place  
 2 saw her  
 3 looked at with scorn  
 4 evilly  
 5 men consider her  
 6 loathsome and foul  
 7 monster  
 8 flee (imp.)  
 9 worse  
 10 see  
 11 evil  
 12 behavior, noise

13 abandon, stop  
 14 flees away  
 15 falters  
 16 pressed close, drawn close  
 17 I would rather spit  
 18 because of  
 19 guggling  
 20 this  
 21 until  
 22 longer  
 23 remain silent  
 24 breath

25 shot away, burst forth  
 26 poured out (*lit.* threw)  
 27 speech  
 28 seems it to you  
 29 do you suppose  
 30 trilling  
 31 often  
 32 harm, injury  
 33 reproach  
 34 foot  
 35 would that it might happen

And þu were ut of þine rise,  
 Þu sholdest singe an oþer w[i]se.<sup>1</sup>  
 Þe nixtingale gaf answare :  
 ' Ȝif Ich me loki<sup>2</sup> wit þe bare,<sup>3</sup>  
 5 And me schilde wit þe blete,<sup>4</sup>  
 Ne reche Ich nogt of þine þrete :  
 Ȝif Ich me holde in mine hegge,  
 Ne recche Ich never what þu segge.<sup>5</sup>  
 Ich wot þat þu art unmilde<sup>6</sup>  
 10 Wiþ hom<sup>7</sup> þat ne muze from þe<sup>8</sup> schilde ;  
 And þu tukest<sup>9</sup> wrope<sup>10</sup> and uuele  
 Whar þu miȝt over smale fugele.<sup>11</sup>  
 Vorþi<sup>12</sup> þu art loþ<sup>13</sup> al fuel-kunne,<sup>14</sup>  
 And alle ho<sup>15</sup> þe driveþ honne,<sup>16</sup>  
 15 And þe bischricheþ<sup>17</sup> and bigredet,<sup>18</sup>  
 And wel narewe<sup>19</sup> þe biledet<sup>20</sup> ;  
 And ek forþe<sup>21</sup> þe sulve mose,<sup>22</sup>  
 Hire þonkes,<sup>23</sup> wolde þe totose.<sup>24</sup>  
 Þu art lodlich to biholde,  
 20 And þu art loþ in monie volde<sup>25</sup> :  
 Þi bodi is short, þi swore<sup>26</sup> is smal,  
 Grettere is þin heved þan þu al ;  
 Þin eȝene boþ col-blake and brode,  
 Riȝt swo ho weren ipeint<sup>27</sup> mid wode<sup>28</sup> ;  
 25 Þu starest so<sup>29</sup> þu wille abiten<sup>30</sup>  
 Al þat þu miȝt<sup>31</sup> mid clivre<sup>32</sup> smiten ;  
 Þi bile is stif and scharp and hoked,  
 Riȝt so an owel<sup>33</sup> þat is coked,

<sup>1</sup> in another fashion<sup>2</sup> may protect myself<sup>3</sup> against the open<sup>4</sup> exposure<sup>5</sup> say<sup>6</sup> harsh<sup>7</sup> those<sup>8</sup> MS. se<sup>9</sup> domineer<sup>10</sup> angrily<sup>11</sup> birds<sup>12</sup> therefore<sup>13</sup> hateful<sup>14</sup> bird-kind<sup>15</sup> they all<sup>16</sup> hence<sup>17</sup> screech at<sup>18</sup> cry out at<sup>19</sup> closely<sup>20</sup> pursue<sup>21</sup> because of that<sup>22</sup> the very titmouse<sup>23</sup> willingly<sup>24</sup> pull to pieces<sup>25</sup> in manifold ways<sup>26</sup> neck<sup>27</sup> painted<sup>28</sup> woad<sup>29</sup> as if<sup>30</sup> bite to pieces<sup>31</sup> might ; MS. mist<sup>32</sup> claws<sup>33</sup> just like an awl

þarmid þu clackes[t] oft and longe,  
 And þat is on <sup>1</sup> of þine songe.  
 Ac þu þretest to <sup>2</sup> mine fleshe,  
 Mid þine clivres woldest me meshe.<sup>3</sup>  
 Þe were icundur to one frogge <sup>4</sup> : 5  
 Þat sit at mulne <sup>5</sup> under cogge <sup>6</sup> ;  
 Snailles, mus,<sup>7</sup> and fule wigte,<sup>8</sup>  
 Boþ þine cunde and þine rigte.<sup>9</sup>  
 Þu sittest adai,<sup>10</sup> and flig[s]t anigt,  
 Þu cupest <sup>11</sup> þat þu art on unwigt. 10  
 Þu art lodlich and unclene,  
 Bi <sup>12</sup> þine neste Ich hit mene,  
 And ek bi þine fule brode <sup>13</sup> —  
 Þu fedest on hom a wel ful fode.<sup>14</sup> . .  
 Þat oþer Ʒer <sup>15</sup> a faukun bredde <sup>16</sup> ; 15  
 His nest noȝt wel he ne bihedde <sup>17</sup> :  
 Þarto þu stele in o<sup>18</sup> day,  
 And leideþ þaron þi fole ey.<sup>19</sup>  
 Þo hit bicom <sup>20</sup> þat he haȝte,<sup>21</sup>  
 And of his eyre <sup>22</sup> briddes wraȝte, 20  
 Ho broȝte his briddes mete,  
 Bihold his nest, iseȝ hi <sup>23</sup> ete :  
 He iseȝ bi one halve <sup>24</sup>  
 His nest ifuled uthalve.<sup>25</sup>  
 Þe faucun was wroþ wit his bridde, 25  
 And lude ȝal <sup>26</sup> and sterne chidde :  
 " Segget me, wo <sup>27</sup> havet þis ido ?  
 Ou nas never icunde <sup>28</sup> þarto ;

<sup>1</sup> one<sup>2</sup> make threats against<sup>3</sup> crush to a pulp<sup>4</sup> it would be more suitable  
for you to have a frog  
(for food)<sup>5</sup> the mill<sup>6</sup> cog ; this line is supplied  
from J. — lacking in C.<sup>7</sup> mice<sup>8</sup> creatures<sup>9</sup> are for thy kind and fit for  
thy deserts<sup>10</sup> by day<sup>11</sup> knowest<sup>12</sup> concerning<sup>13</sup> brood<sup>14</sup> thou feedest in them a very  
foul lot (*lit.* offspring)<sup>15</sup> year<sup>16</sup> bred<sup>17</sup> guarded<sup>18</sup> one<sup>19</sup> foul egg<sup>20</sup> when it happened<sup>21</sup> it (the falcon) hatched<sup>22</sup> its eggs<sup>23</sup> watched them<sup>24</sup> on one side<sup>25</sup> on the outer part<sup>26</sup> cried out aloud<sup>27</sup> who<sup>28</sup> innate, natural

- Hit was idon ow a loþ custe.<sup>1</sup>  
 Segge me gif ge hit wiste."  
 Þo quap þat on and quad þat oþer :  
 " Iwis it was ure oger <sup>2</sup> broþer,  
 5 þe zond <sup>8</sup> þat haved þat grete heved :  
 Wai þat hi[t] nis þarof bireved <sup>4</sup> !  
 Worp hit <sup>5</sup> ut mid þe alre-wrste,  
 Þat his necke him toberste ! "  
 Þe faucun ilefde <sup>6</sup> his bridde,  
 10 And nom <sup>7</sup> þat fule brid amidde,<sup>8</sup>  
 And warp hit of <sup>9</sup> þan wilde bowe,<sup>10</sup>  
 Þar <sup>11</sup> pie<sup>12</sup> and crowe hit todrowe.  
 Herbi men segget a bispel,<sup>18</sup>  
 Þeȝ hit ne bo fuliche spel <sup>14</sup> :  
 15 Al so <sup>16</sup> hit is bi þan unode<sup>16</sup>  
 Þat is icumen of fule brode,  
 And is meind wit fro monne <sup>17</sup> ;  
 Ever he cup þat he com þonne,<sup>18</sup>  
 Þat he com of þan adel eye,<sup>19</sup>  
 20 Þeȝ he a fro nest <sup>20</sup> leie.  
 Þeȝ appel trendli <sup>21</sup> from <sup>22</sup> þon trowe,<sup>26</sup>  
 Þar he and oþer mid growe,  
 Þeȝ he bo <sup>24</sup> þarfrom bicume,<sup>25</sup>  
 He cup wel whonene he is icume.'  
 25 Þos word azaf<sup>26</sup> þe niȝtingale,  
 And after þare longe tale  
 He song so lude and so scharpe,  
 Riȝt so me grulde <sup>27</sup> schille <sup>28</sup> harpe.

1 in a disagreeable manner;  
 custe *for* MS. wiste

2 own

8 the one yonder

4 alas that he is not bereft of it

5 throw him

6 believed

7 took, seized

8 by the middle

9 cast it from

10 bough

11 where

12 magpies

13 in fable, parable

14 long story

15 just so

16 with the evil person

17 mingled with noble  
 (well-born) men

18 thence

19 addled egg

20 in a noble nest

21 roll (trundle)

22 MS. fron

23 tree

24 be

25 gone

26 uttered

27 as if some one were twanging

28 shrill



þos hule luste <sup>1</sup> þiderward,  
 And hold hire ege <sup>2</sup> noþerwa[r]d,<sup>3</sup>  
 And sat tosvolle <sup>4</sup> and ibolwe,<sup>5</sup>  
 Also ho hadde one frogge isuolze,<sup>6</sup>  
 For ho wel wiste and was iwar 5  
 þat ho song hire a bisemar,<sup>7</sup>  
 And nopeles ho gaf <sup>8</sup> andsuare:  
 'Whi neltu <sup>9</sup> flon into þe bare,<sup>10</sup>  
 And sewi <sup>11</sup> ware <sup>12</sup> unker <sup>13</sup> bo <sup>14</sup>  
 Of briȝter howe,<sup>15</sup> of vairur blo <sup>16</sup>?' 10  
 'No, þu havest wel scharpe clawe,  
 Ne kep <sup>17</sup> Ich noȝt þat þu me clawe;  
 þu havest clivers suþe stronge,  
 þu tuengst <sup>18</sup> þarmid so doþ a tonge.  
 þu þoȝtest, so doþ pine ilike,<sup>19</sup> 15  
 Mid faire worde me biswike <sup>20</sup>;  
 Ich nolde don þat þu me rad[d]est,<sup>21</sup>  
 Ich wiste wel þat þu me misraddest.  
 Schamie þe for þin unrede <sup>22</sup>!  
 Unwrogen <sup>23</sup> is þi svikelhede <sup>24</sup>! 20  
 Schild pine svikeldom vram þe ligte,  
 And hud <sup>25</sup> þat woȝe <sup>26</sup> amon[g] þe riȝte.  
 Wane <sup>27</sup> þu wilt þin unriȝt <sup>28</sup> spene,<sup>29</sup>  
 Loke þat hit ne bo isene,  
 Vor svike[l]dom haved schome and hete,<sup>30</sup> 25  
 Ȝif hit is ope <sup>31</sup> and underȝete.<sup>32</sup>  
 Ne speddestu <sup>33</sup> noȝt mid pine unwrenche,<sup>34</sup>

<sup>1</sup> listened<sup>2</sup> eyes<sup>3</sup> cast down<sup>4</sup> swollen with anger<sup>5</sup> puffed with wrath<sup>6</sup> swallowed<sup>7</sup> in scorn of her<sup>8</sup> MS. ȝas (f penciled in margin)<sup>9</sup> will you not<sup>10</sup> the open<sup>11</sup> show<sup>12</sup> MS. þare<sup>13</sup> which (whether) of us two<sup>14</sup> is<sup>15</sup> hue<sup>16</sup> complexion, appearance (bloom)<sup>17</sup> care, wish<sup>18</sup> press tightly, nip<sup>19</sup> as do those of thy sort<sup>20</sup> to deceive, betray<sup>21</sup> counseled<sup>22</sup> ill advice<sup>23</sup> revealed<sup>24</sup> treachery<sup>25</sup> hide<sup>26</sup> wrong<sup>27</sup> MS. þane<sup>28</sup> injustice, wrong<sup>29</sup> spend, show forth<sup>30</sup> hate<sup>31</sup> open, apparent<sup>32</sup> perceived<sup>33</sup> you did not succeed<sup>34</sup> trick

- For Ich am war,<sup>1</sup> and can wel blenche.<sup>2</sup>  
 Ne helpþ nogt þat þu bo to [þ]riste<sup>3</sup> :  
 Ich wolde vizte bet mid liste<sup>4</sup>  
 þan þu mid al þine strengþe.  
 5 Ich habbe on brede<sup>5</sup> and ech on lengþe  
 Castel god on mine rise ;  
 " Wel figt þat wel figt,"<sup>6</sup> seiþ þe wise.  
 Ac lete we awei þos cheste,<sup>7</sup>  
 Vor suiche wordes boþ unwreste<sup>8</sup> ;  
 10 And fo we on<sup>9</sup> mid rizte dome,<sup>10</sup>  
 Mid faire worde and mid ysome.<sup>11</sup>  
 þeȝ we ne bo at one acorde,  
 We muȝe bet mid fayre worde,  
 Witute cheste, and bute figte,  
 15 Plaidi<sup>12</sup> mid foȝe<sup>13</sup> and mid rizte,  
 And mai hure<sup>14</sup> eiþer wat hi wile  
 Mid rizte segge and mid skile.'  
 þo quap þe hule : ' Wu<sup>15</sup> schal us seme,<sup>16</sup>  
 þat kunne and wille rízt us deme<sup>17</sup> ? '  
 20 ' Ich wot wel,' quap þe nigtingale,  
 ' Ne þaref<sup>18</sup> þarof bo no tale.<sup>19</sup>  
 Maister Nichole of Guldeforde,<sup>20</sup>  
 He is wis an war of worde ;  
 He is of dome suþe gleu,<sup>21</sup>  
 25 And him is loþ evrich unþeu.<sup>22</sup>  
 He wot insíxt in<sup>23</sup> eche songe —  
 Wo singet wel, wo singet wronge ;  
 And he can schede<sup>24</sup> vrom þe rizte  
 þat woȝe,<sup>25</sup> þat puster<sup>26</sup> from þe líȝte.'

<sup>1</sup> wary, cautious<sup>2</sup> avoid by shrinking<sup>3</sup> bold<sup>4</sup> cunning<sup>5</sup> breadth<sup>6</sup> cf. *Proverbs of Hendyng*,  
st. 10 (Harl. MS.)<sup>7</sup> let us be done with this strife<sup>8</sup> unavailing ; MS. unwerste<sup>9</sup> let us begin<sup>10</sup> judgment<sup>11</sup> peaceable<sup>12</sup> debate<sup>13</sup> propriety<sup>14</sup> of us<sup>15</sup> who ; MS. þu<sup>16</sup> reconcile<sup>17</sup> judge<sup>18</sup> need<sup>19</sup> dispute<sup>20</sup> Nicholas of Guildford, spoken  
of in lines 1752-3 of the  
poem as living at Port-  
esham, in Dorset<sup>21</sup> wise, prudent<sup>22</sup> vice, bad habit<sup>23</sup> has intelligence in, knows<sup>24</sup> separate, distinguish<sup>25</sup> wrong<sup>26</sup> darkness

þo hule one wile hi biþogte,<sup>1</sup>  
 And after þan þis word upbrogte :  
 ' Ich granti wel þat he us deme,  
 Vor þeȝ he were wile <sup>2</sup> breme,<sup>3</sup>  
 And lof <sup>4</sup> him were niȝtingale, 5  
 And oþer wiȝte <sup>5</sup> gente and smale,  
 Ich wot he is nu suþe acoled.<sup>6</sup>  
 Nis he vor þe noȝt afoled,<sup>7</sup>  
 Þat he, for þine olde lue,  
 Me adun <sup>8</sup> legge <sup>9</sup> and þe buve ; 10  
 Ne schaltu nevre so him queme <sup>10</sup>  
 Þat he for þe fals dom deme.  
 He is him ripe <sup>11</sup> and fastrede,<sup>12</sup>  
 Ne lust <sup>13</sup> him nu to none unrede <sup>14</sup> ;  
 Nu him ne lust na more pleie, 15  
 He wile gon a <sup>15</sup> riȝte weie.'  
 Þe niȝtingale was al ȝare,<sup>16</sup>  
 Ho hadde ilorned <sup>17</sup> wel aiware <sup>18</sup> ;  
 ' Hule,' ho sede, ' seie me soþ,  
 Wi dostu þat unwiȝtis <sup>19</sup> doþ ? 20  
 Þu singist aniȝt and noȝt adai,  
 And al þi song is " Wailawai ! "  
 Þu miȝt mid þine songe afere <sup>20</sup>  
 Alle þat ihereþ þine ibere <sup>21</sup> ;  
 Þu schrichest <sup>22</sup> and ȝollest <sup>23</sup> to þine fere,<sup>24</sup> 25  
 Þat hit is grislich <sup>25</sup> to ihere ;  
 Hit þincheþ <sup>26</sup> boþe wise and snepe,<sup>27</sup>  
 Noȝt þat þu singe, ac þat þu wepe.  
 Þu fligst aniȝt and noȝt adai ;

1 bethought herself for  
a time

2 at one time

3 spirited, passionate

4 dear

5 creatures

6 much cooled

7 befooled

8 below

9 would place (lay)

10 please

11 mature

12 of firm purpose

13 pleases

14 unwise action

15 in

16 ready

17 learned

18 nearly everywhere (OE.

*æghwær*)

19 monsters

20 terrify

21 noise, clamor

22 screechest ; MS. schirchest

23 call out

24 companion

25 horrible

26 MS. þinchest

27 to wise and to foolish

- þarof Ich wndri,<sup>1</sup> and wel mai,  
 Vor evrich þing þat schuniet<sup>2</sup> riht,  
 Hit luveþ puster and hatiet<sup>3</sup> liht;  
 And evrich þing þat is lof misdede,<sup>4</sup>  
 5 Hit luveþ puster to<sup>5</sup> his dede.  
 A wis word, þeȝ hit bo unclene,  
 Is fele manne<sup>6</sup> a muþe<sup>7</sup> imene,<sup>8</sup>  
 For Alvred King hit seide and wrot:  
 "He schunet þat hine wl wot."<sup>9</sup>  
 10 Ich wene þat þu dost also,  
 Vor þu flizst nigtes evermo.  
 Anoþer þing me is awene<sup>10</sup> —  
 Þu havest anigt wel briȝte sene<sup>11</sup>;  
 Bi daie þu art stareblind,<sup>12</sup>  
 15 þat þu ne sichst ne bo[u] ne rind.<sup>13</sup>  
 Adai þu art blind oþer bisne,<sup>14</sup>  
 Þarbi men segget a uorbisne:  
 "Riht so hit farþ bi þan ungode,  
 þat noȝt ne suþ to<sup>15</sup> none gode,  
 20 And is so ful of uvele wrenche<sup>16</sup>  
 þat him ne mai no man atwrenche,<sup>17</sup>  
 And can<sup>18</sup> wel þane<sup>19</sup> pustre<sup>20</sup> wai,  
 And þane briȝte lat awai.<sup>21</sup>"  
 So doþ þat boþ<sup>22</sup> of þine cunde,  
 25 Of ligte nabbeþ hi none imunde.<sup>23</sup>  
 þos hule luste suþe longe,  
 And was oftoneð<sup>24</sup> suþ[e] stronge.  
 Ho quap: "þu [h]attest<sup>25</sup> nigtingale;  
 þu miȝtest bet hoten<sup>26</sup> galegale,<sup>27</sup>

<sup>1</sup> wonder<sup>2</sup> shuns<sup>3</sup> hates<sup>4</sup> to which evil-doing is dear<sup>5</sup> for<sup>6</sup> of many men<sup>7</sup> in the mouths<sup>8</sup> commonly<sup>9</sup> that which knows him to  
be foul<sup>10</sup> is in my thoughts<sup>11</sup> power of vision<sup>12</sup> purblind<sup>13</sup> see neither bough nor bark<sup>14</sup> of dim sight<sup>15</sup> looks toward<sup>16</sup> guile, trickery<sup>17</sup> evade, elude; MS. -prenche<sup>18</sup> knows<sup>19</sup> the<sup>20</sup> dark; MS. þurste<sup>21</sup> abandons the bright one<sup>22</sup> those that are<sup>23</sup> thought<sup>24</sup> irritated<sup>25</sup> are called<sup>26</sup> better be called<sup>27</sup> chatterbox

Vor þu havest to monie tale.<sup>1</sup>  
 Lat þine tunge habbe spale<sup>2</sup> !  
 Þu wenest þat þes dai bo þin oge<sup>3</sup> ;  
 Lat me nu habbe mine þroge<sup>4</sup> ;  
 Bo nu stille and lat me speke, 5  
 Ich wille bon of þe awreke.<sup>5</sup>  
 And lust<sup>6</sup> hu Ich con me bitelle,<sup>7</sup>  
 Mid rigte soþe, witute spelle.<sup>8</sup>  
 Þu seist þat Ich me hude adai,  
 Þarto ne segge Ich nich ne nai<sup>9</sup> ; 10  
 And lust, Ich telle þe warevore,  
 Al wi hit is and warevore.  
 Ich habbe bile stif and stronge,  
 And gode clivers scharp and longe,  
 So hit bicumep<sup>10</sup> to havekes cunne ; 15  
 Hit is min higte,<sup>11</sup> hit is mi wune,<sup>12</sup>  
 Þat Ich me draze<sup>13</sup> to mine cunde,  
 Ne mai [me] no man þarevore schende<sup>14</sup> ;  
 On me hit is wel isene,  
 Vor rigte cunde<sup>15</sup> Ich am so kene. 20  
 Vorpi Ich am loþ smale foþle<sup>16</sup>  
 Þat floþ bi<sup>17</sup> grunde an bi þuvel<sup>18</sup> :  
 Hi me bichermet<sup>19</sup> and bigredeþ,<sup>20</sup>  
 And hore<sup>21</sup> flockes to me ledeþ.  
 Me is lof to habbe reste, 25  
 And sitte stille in mine neste ;  
 Vor nere Ich never no þe betere,  
 Ȝif<sup>22</sup> Ich mid chavling<sup>23</sup> and mid chatere  
 Hom schende, and mid fule worde. . . .  
 Ne lust me<sup>24</sup> wit þe screwen<sup>25</sup> chide,<sup>26</sup> 30

1 tales  
 2 respite, rest  
 3 own  
 4 turn  
 5 avenged  
 6 listen  
 7 justify  
 8 a long story  
 9 no nor nay

10 is fitting  
 11 joy  
 12 delight  
 13 turn me  
 14 blame, revile  
 15 from very nature  
 16 to small birds  
 17 near  
 18 bushes

19 scream at  
 20 cry out upon  
 21 their  
 22 MS. þif  
 23 scolding  
 24 it does not please me  
 25 evil persons  
 26 to contend

- Forþi Ich wende <sup>1</sup> from hom wide.<sup>2</sup>  
 Hit is a wise monne dome,<sup>3</sup>  
 And hi hit segget wel ilome,<sup>4</sup>  
 Þat me ne <sup>5</sup> chide wit þe gidie,<sup>6</sup>  
 5 Ne wit þan ofne <sup>7</sup> me ne ȝonie.<sup>8</sup>  
 At sume siþe herde I telle  
 Hu Alvred sede on his spelle <sup>9</sup> :  
 " Loke þat þu ne bo þare  
 Þar <sup>10</sup> chavling boþ and cheste ȝare ;  
 10 Lat sottes <sup>11</sup> chide, and vorþ þu go " ;  
 And Ich am wis, and do also.  
 And ȝet Alvred seide, an oþer side,<sup>12</sup>  
 A word þat is isprunge <sup>13</sup> wide :  
 " Þat wit þe fule haveþ imene,<sup>14</sup>  
 15 Ne cumeþ he never from him cleine."  
 Wenestu þat haveck bo þe worse  
 Þoȝ crowe bigrede <sup>15</sup> him bi þe mershe,  
 And goþ to him mid hore chirme <sup>16</sup>  
 Riȝt so hi wille wit him schirme <sup>17</sup> ?  
 20 Þe havec folgeþ gode rede,<sup>18</sup>  
 And fliȝt his wei, and lat him <sup>19</sup> grede.<sup>20</sup>  
 Ȝet þu me seist of oþer þinge,  
 And telst þat Ich ne can noȝt singe,  
 Ac al mi rorde <sup>21</sup> is woning,<sup>22</sup>  
 25 And to ihire grislich <sup>23</sup> þing.  
 Þat nis noȝt soþ, Ich singe efne,<sup>24</sup>  
 Mid fulle dreme <sup>25</sup> and lude stefne.<sup>26</sup>  
 Þu wenist <sup>27</sup> þat ech song bo grislich

<sup>1</sup> turn<sup>2</sup> far<sup>3</sup> in the judgment of wise men<sup>4</sup> often<sup>5</sup> they do not<sup>6</sup> foolish<sup>7</sup> oven, furnace<sup>8</sup> yawn<sup>9</sup> instruction<sup>10</sup> where<sup>11</sup> fools<sup>12</sup> on the other hand<sup>13</sup> spread<sup>14</sup> he who has companionship  
with the foul<sup>15</sup> cry out upon<sup>16</sup> uproar<sup>17</sup> fight<sup>18</sup> counsel<sup>19</sup> MS. hem<sup>20</sup> cry out<sup>21</sup> speech<sup>22</sup> lamenting<sup>23</sup> horrible<sup>24</sup> evenly<sup>25</sup> melody<sup>26</sup> voice<sup>27</sup> thinkest

þat þine pipinge nis ilich.<sup>1</sup>  
 Mi stefne is bold <sup>2</sup> and noȝt unorne,<sup>8</sup>  
 Ho is ilich one grete horne,  
 And þin is ilich one pipe  
 Of one smale wode <sup>4</sup> unripe. 5  
 Ich singe bet þan þu dest ;  
 þu chaterest so doþ on Irish prost.  
 Ich singe an eve, a rigte time,<sup>6</sup>  
 And soþþe won hit is bedtime,  
 þe þridde siþe at <sup>6</sup> middelnigte ; 10  
 And so Ich mine song adiȝte <sup>7</sup>  
 Wone Ich iso <sup>8</sup> arise vorre <sup>9</sup>  
 Oþer dairim <sup>10</sup> oþer daisterre.  
 Ich do god mid mine þrote,  
 And warni men to hore note.<sup>11</sup> 15  
 Ac þu singest alle longe nigȝt,  
 From eve fort <sup>12</sup> hit is dailiȝt,  
 And evre seist þin o song  
 So longe so þe nigȝt is long ;  
 And evre croweþ þi wrecche crei,<sup>18</sup> 20  
 þat he ne swikeþ <sup>14</sup> nigȝt ne dai.  
 Mid þine pipinge þu adunest <sup>15</sup>  
 þas monnes earen þar þu wunest,  
 And makest þine song so unwrþ <sup>16</sup>  
 þa[t] me ne telþ of þar noȝ[t] wrþ.<sup>17</sup> 25  
 Evrich murȝþe <sup>18</sup> mai so longe ileste,  
 þat ho shal liki <sup>19</sup> wel unwreste,<sup>20</sup>  
 Vor harpe, and pipe, and fugeles songe  
 Mislikeþ, ȝif hit is to long.  
 Ne bo þe song never so murie, 30

<sup>1</sup> is not like<sup>2</sup> MS. blod<sup>8</sup> feeble<sup>4</sup> weed<sup>5</sup> in the evening, at the proper time<sup>6</sup> MS. ad<sup>7</sup> arrange, prepare<sup>8</sup> see<sup>9</sup> afar<sup>10</sup> daybreak<sup>11</sup> profit, advantage<sup>12</sup> until<sup>18</sup> crying<sup>14</sup> ceases<sup>15</sup> dinnest<sup>16</sup> unworthy<sup>17</sup> that men set no store by it<sup>18</sup> joy<sup>19</sup> please<sup>20</sup> ill

þat he ne shal þinche<sup>1</sup> wel unmurie<sup>2</sup>  
 Ȝef he ilestep<sup>3</sup> over wille<sup>4</sup>;  
 So þu miȝt þine song aspille.<sup>5</sup>

### PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Until 1906, the work called *The Vision* (rather, *Book*) of William concerning Piers the Plowman had been for a generation attributed, on the faith of two fifteenth-century memoranda, to William Langland, or Langley, whom Skeat believed to have been born about 1332, and to have died about 1400. Three texts of the poem have been printed, of which the second and third (known as B and C) are revisions and extensions of the first (A). The dates assigned to these are: A, 1362; B, 1377; C, after 1390 (probably about 1398). The A-text has 2567 lines, the B-text 7242, and the C-text 7357. All have been edited by Skeat in two volumes (Oxford, 1886).

Professor John M. Manly presents his view, which differs in many respects from that hitherto received, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 2. According to him, the twelve cantos, or passus, contained in A, were the work of two different authors, of whom the second wrote Passus 9-12, while B and C represent two revisions, so that there would have been four authors; but since he finds 61 lines at the end of the A-text (12. 57-105, and 12 lines not given in Skeat's large edition, 1. 331) to have been written by a certain John But (or Butt), the whole number of authors would be five.

On the theory of the single authorship, Jusserand has an illuminating chapter in Vol. 1 of his *Literary History of the English People*. For a general bibliography, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2. 490-7.

The passages given below are all from the B-text. They differ so considerably from the A-text that Manly's characterization of the style of the latter sufficiently holds concerning them (*op. cit.* p. 13): 'As to the style, no summary or paraphrase can reproduce its picturesqueness and verve. It is always simple, direct, evocative of a constant series of clear and sharply-defined images of individuals and groups. Little or no attempt is made at elaborate, or even ordinarily full, description, and color-words are singularly few; but it would be difficult to find a piece of writing from which the reader derives a clearer vision of individuals or groups of moving figures in their habit as they lived. That the author was endowed in the highest degree with the faculty of visualization is proved, not merely by his ability to stimulate the reader to form mental images, but even more by the fact that all the movements of individuals and groups can be followed with ease and certainty. Composition, in the larger sense of structural excellence, that quality common in French literature,

<sup>1</sup> seem

<sup>2</sup> unpleasing

<sup>3</sup> lasts

<sup>4</sup> beyond (the point of) pleasure; MS. unwill

<sup>5</sup> spoil



but all too rare in English, and supposed to be notably lacking in Piers the Plowman, is one of the most striking features.'

Our text is from Skeat's smaller edition, based on MS. Laud 581, with certain omitted lines supplied from the large edition; with the omission of the dots which mark the middle of lines; and with changes in punctuation, capitalization, and the joining of words. The lines quoted are Prol. 1-122; 3. 1-129, 133-68; 5. 304-46, 352-9, 364-71; 5. 392-478; 6. 107-53.

## PROLOGUE

In a somer seson, whan soft was the sonne,  
 I shope<sup>1</sup> me in shroudes,<sup>2</sup> as I a shepe<sup>3</sup> were;  
 In habite as an heremite, unholy of workes,  
 Went wyde in þis world, wondres to here.  
 Ac on a May mornynge, on Malverne hilles,<sup>4</sup> 5  
 Me byfel a ferly<sup>5</sup> — of fairy, me thouȝte;  
 I was wery, forwandred,<sup>6</sup> and went me to reste  
 Under a brode banke, bi a bornes<sup>7</sup> side;  
 And as I lay and lened, and loked in þe wateres,  
 I slombred in a slepyng — it sweyved<sup>8</sup> so merye. 10  
 . . .  
 Thanne gan I to meten<sup>9</sup> a merveilouse swevene,  
 That I was in a wilderness — wist I never where;  
 As I bihelde into þe est, an hiegh<sup>10</sup> to þe sonne,  
 I seigh a toure on a toft,<sup>11</sup> trielich<sup>12</sup> ymaked;  
 A depe dale binethe, a dongeon þereinne, 15  
 With depe dyches and derke, and dredful of sight.  
 A faire felde ful of folke fonde I there bytwene,  
 Of alle maner of men — þe mene and þe riche —  
 Worchyng and wandryng, as þe worlde asketh.<sup>13</sup>  
 Some putten hem<sup>14</sup> to þe plow, played ful selde<sup>15</sup>; 20  
 In settyng<sup>16</sup> and in sowyng swonken<sup>17</sup> ful harde,  
 And wonnen that<sup>18</sup> wastours<sup>19</sup> with glotonye destruyeth.

<sup>1</sup> robed

<sup>2</sup> rough garments

<sup>3</sup> shepherd

<sup>4</sup> hills; the Malvern hills are  
in Worcestershire, on the  
border of Herefordshire

<sup>5</sup> marvel

<sup>6</sup> worn out with wandering

<sup>7</sup> burn's, brook's

<sup>8</sup> rippled

<sup>9</sup> dream

<sup>10</sup> on high

<sup>11</sup> hilltop

<sup>12</sup> excellently

<sup>13</sup> requires, demands

<sup>14</sup> set themselves

<sup>15</sup> seldom

<sup>16</sup> planting

<sup>17</sup> labored

<sup>18</sup> gained what

<sup>19</sup> spendthrifts

And some putten hem to pruyde — apparailed hem þereafter<sup>1</sup>;  
In contenance<sup>2</sup> of clothyng comen disguised.

In prayers and in penance putten hem manye,  
Al for love of owre Lorde lyveden ful streyte,<sup>3</sup>

5 In hope for to have hevenliche<sup>4</sup> blisse;  
As ancre<sup>5</sup> and heremites that holden hem in here selles,  
And coveiten nought in contre to kairen aboute<sup>6</sup>  
For no likerous liflode,<sup>7</sup> her lykam<sup>8</sup> to plese.

And somme chosen chaffare<sup>9</sup>; they cheven<sup>10</sup> the bettere —  
10 As it semeth to owre sygt that suche men thryveth;  
And somme murthes to make, as mynstralles conneth,<sup>11</sup>  
And geten gold with here glee — giltles, I leve.<sup>12</sup>  
Ac japers<sup>13</sup> and jangelers,<sup>14</sup> Judas chylderen,  
Feynen hem fantasies, and foles hem maketh,  
15 And han here witte at wille, to worche, gif þei sholde;  
That Poule precheth of hem I nel nought preve it here:  
*Qui turpiloquium loquitur* is Luciferes hyne.<sup>15</sup>

Bidders<sup>16</sup> and beggeres fast aboute gede,<sup>17</sup>  
With her belies and her bagges of bred ful ycrammed;  
20 Fayteden<sup>18</sup> for here fode, fougten atte ale;  
In glotonye, God it wote, gon hii to bedde,  
And risen with ribaudye,<sup>19</sup> tho Roberdes knaves;  
Slepe and sori sleuthe<sup>20</sup> seweth<sup>21</sup> hem evre.

Pilgrymes and palmers plixted hem togidere  
25 To seke Seynt James,<sup>22</sup> and seyntes in Rome.  
Thei went forth in here wey, with many wise tales,

<sup>1</sup> accordingly

<sup>2</sup> outward appearance

<sup>3</sup> strictly

<sup>4</sup> of the kingdom of heaven

<sup>5</sup> anchorites

<sup>6</sup> go about

<sup>7</sup> daintily living

<sup>8</sup> body

<sup>9</sup> a merchant's life

<sup>10</sup> achieved, prospered

<sup>11</sup> know how to do

<sup>12</sup> believe

<sup>13</sup> jesters

<sup>14</sup> jongleurs

<sup>15</sup> servant

<sup>16</sup> beggars

<sup>17</sup> went

<sup>18</sup> begged deceitfully

<sup>19</sup> ribaldry, sin

<sup>20</sup> sloth

<sup>21</sup> pursue

<sup>22</sup> St. James of Compostella

17. *Qui . . . loquitur*: this is not from St. Paul; but it bears some resemblance to Eph. 5. 4 and Col. 3. 8.

22. *Roberdes knaves*: the so-called Roberts men were robbers and vagabonds (perhaps originally Robin Hood's men).

And hadden leve to lye al here lyf after.  
 I seigh somme that seiden þei had ysougt seyntes ;  
 To eche a tale þat þei tolde here tonge was tempred to lye  
 More þan to sey soth, it semed bi here speche.

Heremites on an heep,<sup>1</sup> with hoked staves, 5  
 Wenten to Walsyngham,<sup>2</sup> and here wenches after ;  
 Grete lobyes<sup>3</sup> and longe, that loth were to swynke,  
 Clothedem hem in copis,<sup>4</sup> to ben knowen fram othere,  
 And shopen<sup>5</sup> hem heremites, here ese to have.

I fonde pere freris — alle þe foure ordres 10  
 Preched þe peple for profit of hemselven ;  
 Glosed<sup>6</sup> þe gospel as hem good lyked,<sup>7</sup>  
 For coveitise of copis construed it as þei wolde.  
 Many of þis maistres freris mowe clothen hem at lykyng,  
 For here money and marchandise marchen togideres ; 15  
 For sith Charite haþ be chapman,<sup>8</sup> and chief to shryve lordes,  
 Many ferlis han fallen in a fewe geris.  
 But<sup>9</sup> Holy Chirche and hii holde better togideres,  
 The most myschief on molde<sup>10</sup> is mountyng wel faste.

þere preched a pardonere, as he a prest were ; 20  
 Brougte forth a bulle<sup>11</sup> with bishopes seles,  
 And seide þat hymself mygte assoilen<sup>12</sup> hem alle  
 Of falshed, of fastyng, of vowes ybroken.  
 Lewed men leved hym wel, and lyked his wordes ;  
 Comen up knelyng, to kissen his bulles ; 25  
 He bonched<sup>13</sup> hem with his brevet,<sup>14</sup> and blered here eyes,  
 And rauhte<sup>15</sup> with his ragman<sup>16</sup> rynges and broches ;  
 Thus þey geven here golde, glotones to kepe,

<sup>1</sup> in great numbers

<sup>2</sup> to the shrine of Our Lady  
of Walsingham — a popu-  
lar pilgrimage

<sup>3</sup> lubbers

<sup>4</sup> friars' capes or cloaks

<sup>5</sup> made

<sup>6</sup> glossed, commented on

<sup>7</sup> pleased them well

<sup>8</sup> love has become a trades-  
man

<sup>9</sup> unless

<sup>10</sup> on the earth

<sup>11</sup> a papal bull

<sup>12</sup> absolve

<sup>13</sup> banged, beat

<sup>14</sup> letter of indulgence

<sup>15</sup> obtained

<sup>16</sup> bull

10. four ordres : the four orders of friars were the Carmelites (white friars), Augustines (Austin friars), Dominicans (black friars), and Minorites (gray friars).

And levet<sup>1</sup> such loseles<sup>2</sup> þat lecherye haunten.<sup>8</sup>  
 Were þe bischop yblissed,<sup>4</sup> and worth bothe his eres,  
 His seel shulde nougt be sent to deceyve þe peple;  
 Ac it is nauht by<sup>6</sup> þe bischop þat þe boy precheth,  
 5 For the parisch prest and þe pardonere parten þe silver  
 That þe poraille<sup>6</sup> of þe parisch sholde have, gif þei nere.<sup>7</sup>

Persones<sup>8</sup> and parisch prestes pleynd hem to þe bischop  
 þat here parissches were pore, sith þe pestilence-tyme,  
 To have a lycence and a leve at London to dwelle,  
 10 And syngen þere for symonye — for silver is swete.

Bischopes and bachelers,<sup>9</sup> bothe maistres and doctours,  
 þat han cure<sup>10</sup> under Criste, and crounyng<sup>11</sup> in tokne  
 And signe þat þei sholden shryven here paroschienes,  
 Prechen and prey for hem, and þe pore fede,  
 15 Ligen in London — in Lenten, an elles.<sup>12</sup>  
 Somme serven þe kyng, and his silver tellen<sup>18</sup>;  
 In Cheker<sup>14</sup> and in Chancerye chalengen<sup>15</sup> his dettes  
 Of wardes<sup>16</sup> and wardmotes,<sup>17</sup> weyves and streyves.<sup>18</sup>  
 And some serven as servantz lordes and ladyes,  
 20 And in stede of stuwardes sytten and demen.<sup>19</sup>  
 Here messe and here matynes, and many of here oures,<sup>20</sup>  
 Arn don undevoutlych; drede is at þe laste  
 Lest Crist in consistorie<sup>21</sup> acorse ful manye.

I parceyved of þe power þat Peter had to kepe,  
 25 To bynde and to unbynde, as þe boke telleth,<sup>22</sup>  
 How he it left wiþ love, as owre Lorde hight,<sup>23</sup>  
 Amonges foure vertues — þe best of all vertues,  
 þat cardinales ben called, and closyng ȝatis<sup>24</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> believe<sup>2</sup> wretches (vagabonds)<sup>8</sup> practise<sup>4</sup> a holy (blessed) man<sup>5</sup> concerning<sup>6</sup> poor people<sup>7</sup> if it were not for them<sup>8</sup> parsons<sup>9</sup> young men<sup>10</sup> a charge<sup>11</sup> the tonsure<sup>12</sup> and at other times<sup>18</sup> count<sup>14</sup> the court of the Exchequer<sup>15</sup> claim<sup>16</sup> wardships<sup>17</sup> ward-courts<sup>18</sup> waifs and strays — abandoned property or that for which there were no heirs<sup>19</sup> judge<sup>20</sup> canonical hours<sup>21</sup> court, tribunal; here, Last Judgment<sup>22</sup> Matt. 16. 19<sup>23</sup> bade<sup>24</sup> with power to close gates, because 'cardinal' is derived from *cardo*, a hinge

þere Crist is in kyngdome to close and to shutte,  
 And to opne it to hem, and hevene blisse shewe.  
 Ac of þe cardinales atte courte <sup>1</sup> þat caugt of <sup>2</sup> þat name,  
 And power presumed in hem a Pope to make,  
 To han þat power þat Peter hadde, inpugnen I nelle,<sup>3</sup> 5  
 For in love and letterure <sup>4</sup> þe eleccioun bilongeth;  
 Forþi I can and can naughte <sup>5</sup> of courte speke more.  
 þanne come þere a kyng — knyghthod hym ladde;  
 Migt of þe comunes made hym to regne;  
 And þanne cam Kynde Wytte,<sup>6</sup> and clerkes he made, 10  
 For to conseilte þe kyng, and þe comune save.  
 'The kyng and knyghthode, and clergie bothe,  
 Casten <sup>7</sup> þat þe comune shulde hemself fynde.<sup>8</sup>  
 þe comune contrevd <sup>9</sup> of Kynde Witte craftes,  
 And for profit of alle þe poeple, plowmen ordeygnd, 15  
 To tilie <sup>10</sup> and travaile, as Trewe Lyf askep.  
 þe kyng and þe comune, and Kynde Witte þe thridde,  
 Shope <sup>11</sup> lawe and lewte — eche man to knowe his owne.

## MEED THE MAIDEN

Now is Mede <sup>12</sup> þe mayde, and na mo of hem alle,  
 With bedellus <sup>13</sup> and wiþ bayllyves brougt bifor þe kyng. 20  
 The kyng called a clerke — can I nougt his name —  
 To take Mede þe mayde, and make hire at ese.  
 'I shal assaye hir myself, and sothelich appose <sup>14</sup>  
 What man of þis molde þat hire were leveste <sup>15</sup>;  
 And if she worche bi my witte, and my wille folwe, 25  
 I wil forgyve hir þis gilte, so me God help!'

Curteysliche þe clerke þanne, as þe kyng hight,

<sup>1</sup> at the court of Rome<sup>2</sup> received<sup>3</sup> I will not raise question<sup>4</sup> learning
<sup>5</sup> can because of what he  
 knows, but cannot be-  
 cause of his reverence
<sup>6</sup> common sense<sup>7</sup> contrived<sup>8</sup> provide food for themselves<sup>9</sup> devised<sup>10</sup> till, cultivate<sup>11</sup> created<sup>12</sup> bribery, 'graft'<sup>13</sup> beadles, summoners<sup>14</sup> inquire<sup>15</sup> dearest

Toke Mede bi þe middel,<sup>1</sup> and brougte hir into chaumbre,  
And þere was myrthe and mynstralcy, Mede to plesse.

They þat wonyeth in Westmynstre worschipped hir alle,  
Gentelliche, wiþ joye; þe justices somme<sup>2</sup>

- 5 Busked<sup>3</sup> hem to þe boure<sup>4</sup> þere þe birde<sup>5</sup> dwelled,  
To conforte hire kyndely, by clergise<sup>6</sup> leve,  
And seiden: 'Mourne nought, Mede, ne make þow no sorwe  
For we wil wisse<sup>7</sup> þe kynge, and þi wey shape  
To be wedded at þi wille, and where þe leve liketh,<sup>8</sup>  
10 For al Consience caste<sup>9</sup> or craft, as I trowe!'

- Middeliche Mede þanne mercyed<sup>10</sup> hem alle  
Of þeire gret goodnesse, and gaf hem uchone  
Coupes<sup>11</sup> of clene golde, and coppis<sup>12</sup> of silver,  
Rynges with rubies, and ricchesses manye;  
15 The leste man of here meyne<sup>13</sup> a motoun<sup>14</sup> of golde.  
Thanne laugte<sup>15</sup> þei leve, þis lordes, at<sup>16</sup> Mede.

- With that comen clerkis to conforte hir þe same,  
And beden hire be blithe — 'for we beth þine owne,  
For to worche þi wille þe while þow mygte laste.'  
20 Hendeliche<sup>17</sup> heo þanne bihight<sup>18</sup> hem þe same,  
To 'love þow lelli,<sup>19</sup> and lordes to make,  
And in þe consistorie atte courte do calle<sup>20</sup> þowre names;  
Shal no lewdnesse lette<sup>21</sup> þe leode<sup>22</sup> þat I lovy, e,  
That he ne worth first avanced — for I am biknowen<sup>23</sup> —  
25 Þere konnyng<sup>24</sup> clerkes shul klokke<sup>25</sup> bihynde.'

þanne come þere a confessoure, coped as a frere;  
To Mede þe mayde he mellud<sup>26</sup> þis wordes,  
And seide ful softly — in shrifte<sup>27</sup> as it were:

1 waist  
2 some of them  
3 hastened  
4 bower, lady's chamber  
5 lady  
6 learning's  
7 guide  
8 you please  
9 conscience's contrivance  
10 thanked

11 bowls  
12 cups  
13 household  
14 a French gold coin worth  
about five shillings,  
stamped with the impres-  
sion of the Lamb of God  
15 took  
16 of  
17 courteously

18 promised  
19 loyally  
20 cause to be called  
21 ignorance hinder  
22 man  
23 well known  
24 wise, learned  
25 limp, hobble  
26 spoke  
27 confession

'þeiȝ lewed men and lered<sup>1</sup> men had leyne by þe bothe,  
 And Falsenesse haved yfolwed þe al þis fyfty wyntre,  
 I shal assoille þe myselve for a seme<sup>2</sup> of whete,  
 And also be þi bedeman,<sup>3</sup> and bere wel þi message  
 Amonges knyghtes and clerkis, Conscience to torne.<sup>4</sup> 5  
 Thanne Mede for here mysdedes to þat man kneled,  
 And shrove hire of hire shrewednesse<sup>5</sup> — shamelees, I trowe;  
 Tolde hym a tale, and toke<sup>6</sup> hym a noble,<sup>7</sup>  
 For to ben hire bedeman, and hire brokour als.<sup>8</sup>  
 Thanne he assoilled hir sone; and sithen he seyde: 10  
 'We han a wyndowe a wirchyng<sup>9</sup> wil sitten us ful heigh<sup>10</sup>;  
 Woldestow glase<sup>11</sup> þat gable, and grave þereinne þi name,  
 Siker<sup>12</sup> sholde þi soule be hevene to have.'  
 'Wist I that,' quod þat womman, 'I wolde nouȝt spare  
 For to be ȝowre frende, frere, and faille ȝow nevre, 15  
 Whil ȝe love lordes þat lechery haunteth,  
 And lakketh nouȝt ladis þat loveth wel the same.  
 It is frelete of flesh — ȝe fynde it in bokes —  
 And a course of kynde<sup>13</sup> wherof we komen alle;  
 Who may scape þe sklaundre,<sup>14</sup> þe skathe<sup>15</sup> is sone amended; 20  
 It is synne of þe sevene sonnest<sup>16</sup> releessed.<sup>17</sup>  
 Have mercy,' quod Mede, 'of men þat it haunte,  
 And I shal kevre<sup>18</sup> ȝowre kirke, ȝowre cloystre do maken,  
 Woves<sup>19</sup> do whiten, and wyndowes glasen,  
 Do peynten and purtraye, and paye for þe makynge, 25  
 That evry segge<sup>20</sup> shal seyn I am sustre of ȝowre hous.'  
 Ac God to alle good folke suche gravynge defendeth,<sup>21</sup>  
 To writen in wyndowes of here wel<sup>22</sup> dedes,

<sup>1</sup> learned<sup>2</sup> load<sup>3</sup> beadsman<sup>4</sup> defeat<sup>5</sup> sin<sup>6</sup> gave<sup>7</sup> a third of a pound sterling<sup>8</sup> broker also<sup>9</sup> in process of being made<sup>10</sup> cost us full dear<sup>11</sup> provide the glass for<sup>12</sup> certain<sup>13</sup> nature<sup>14</sup> disgrace<sup>15</sup> harm<sup>16</sup> soonest<sup>17</sup> forgiven<sup>18</sup> cover<sup>19</sup> walls<sup>20</sup> person<sup>21</sup> forbids<sup>22</sup> good

26. sustre: any wealthy person could belong to a religious order of friars through a 'letter of fraternity.'

On aventure<sup>1</sup> pruyde be peynted þere, and pompe of þe worlde;  
 For Crist knoweþ þi conscience and þi kynde wille,<sup>2</sup>  
 And þi coste,<sup>3</sup> and þi coveitise, and who þe catel ougte.<sup>4</sup>  
 Forþi I lere<sup>5</sup> ȝow, lordes, leueþ suche werkes —

- 5 To writen in wyndowes of ȝowre wel dedes,  
 Or to greden<sup>6</sup> after Goddis men whan ȝe delen doles;  
 An aventure ȝe han ȝowre hire here,<sup>7</sup> and ȝoure hevene als;

*Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra:*<sup>8</sup>

- Lat nouȝte þi left half, late ne rathe,<sup>9</sup>  
 10 Wyte what þow worchest with þi riȝt syde;  
 For þus, bit<sup>10</sup> þe gospel, gode men do here almesse. ✓

- Meires<sup>11</sup> and maceres,<sup>12</sup> that menes<sup>13</sup> ben bitwene  
 þe kynge and þe comune to kepe þe lawes,  
 To punyschen on pillories and pynnyng-stoles<sup>14</sup>  
 15 Brewesteres<sup>15</sup> and bakesteres,<sup>16</sup> bocheres and cokes;  
 For þise aren men on þis molde þat moste harme worcheth  
 To þe pore peple þat parcelmele<sup>17</sup> buggen,<sup>18</sup>  
 For they poysoun þe peple priveliche<sup>19</sup> and oft;  
 Thei rychen<sup>20</sup> þorw regraterye,<sup>21</sup> and rentes hem buggen  
 20 With þat þe pore people shulde put in here wombe<sup>22</sup>;  
 For toke þei on<sup>23</sup> trewly, þei tymbred nouȝt<sup>24</sup> so heȝe,  
 Ne bouȝte non burgages,<sup>25</sup> be ȝe ful certeyne.  
 Ac Mede þe mayde þe maire hath bisouȝte,  
 Of alle suche sellers sylver to take,  
 25 Or presentz withoute pens, as peces of silver,  
 Ringes, or other richesse, þe regrateres to maynetene:  
 'For my love,' quod that lady, 'love hem uch one,  
 And soffre hem to selle somdele<sup>26</sup> aȝeins resoun.'

1 lest perchance

2 natural disposition

3 expenses

4 who really owned the property

5 teach

6 cry after, send for

7 Matt. 6. 2

8 Matt. 6. 3

9 early

10 bids

11 mayors, magistrates

12 mace-bearers (officers of  
the courts)

13 intermediaries

14 stools of punishment

15 brewers

16 bakers

17 in small quantities

18 buy

19 secretly

20 grow rich

21 selling retail

22 stomach

23 if they took in money

24 would not build

25 town-dwellings

26 somewhat



Salamon þe sage a sarmoun he made,  
 For to amende maires, and men þat kepen lawes,  
 And tolde hem þis teme,<sup>1</sup> þat I telle thynke :

*Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui libenter accipiunt munera, etc.*<sup>2</sup>

Amonge þis lettered ledes,<sup>3</sup> þis Latyn is to mene 5  
 That fyre shal falle, and brenne al to blo askes<sup>4</sup>  
 The houses and þe homes of hem þat desireth  
 Ziftes or zeres-zyves<sup>5</sup> bicause of here offices.

The kyng fro conseil le cam, and called after Mede,  
 And ofsent<sup>6</sup> hir als wythe<sup>7</sup> with serjauntes manye, 10  
 That brougten hir to bowre with blisse and with joye.  
 Curteisliche þe kyng þanne comsed<sup>8</sup> to telle —  
 To Mede þe mayde melleth<sup>9</sup> þise wordes :  
 'Unwittily, womman, wrougte hastow oft,  
 Ac worse wrougtestow nevre þan þo<sup>10</sup> þow Fals toke<sup>11</sup>; 15  
 But I forgyve þe þat gilte, and graunte þe my grace ;  
 Hennes to þi deth-day do so na more.

I have a knygte, Conscience, cam late fro bigunde<sup>12</sup> ;  
 Zif he wilneth þe to wyf, wyltow hym have ?'  
 'Ze, lorde,' quod þat lady, 'Lorde forbede elles ! 20  
 But<sup>13</sup> I be holely at zowre heste, lat hange<sup>14</sup> me sone !'

And þanne was Conscience calde to come and appiere  
 Bifor þe kyng and his conseil le, as clerkes and othere.  
 Knelynge, Conscience to þe kyng louted,<sup>15</sup>  
 To wite what his wille were, and what he do shulde. 25  
 'Woltow wedde þis womman,' quod þe kyng, 'zif I wil assente —  
 For she is fayne of þi felawship — for to be þi make<sup>16</sup> ?'

Quod Conscience to þe kyng : 'Cryst it me forbede !  
 Ar<sup>17</sup> I wedde suche a wyf, wo me bityde !  
 For she is frele<sup>18</sup> of hir feith, fykel of here speche, 30

<sup>1</sup> text, theme

<sup>2</sup> Job 15. 34

<sup>3</sup> persons

<sup>4</sup> livid ashes

<sup>5</sup> New Year's gifts (extorted  
 as bribes)

<sup>6</sup> sent after

<sup>7</sup> as quickly as possible

<sup>8</sup> began

<sup>9</sup> speaks

<sup>10</sup> when

<sup>11</sup> took to thee Falsehood

<sup>12</sup> across the sea

<sup>13</sup> except

<sup>14</sup> have me hanged

<sup>15</sup> made obeisance

<sup>16</sup> mate

<sup>17</sup> before

<sup>18</sup> frail

And maketh men mysdo many score tymes ;  
 Truste of hire tresore treieth<sup>1</sup> ful manye.  
 Wyves and widewes wantounes she techeth,<sup>2</sup>  
 And lereth<sup>3</sup> hem leccherye that loveth hire giftes.  
 5   Ȝowre fadre she felled þorw fals biheste,  
 And hath apoyssounde Popis,<sup>4</sup> and peired<sup>5</sup> Holi Cherche.  
 Is nauht a better baude, bi hym þat me made,  
 Bitwene hevene and helle — in erthe though men sougte. . . .  
 Sisoures<sup>6</sup> and sompnoures<sup>7</sup> — suche men hir preiseth ;  
 10   Shireves of shires were shent gif she nere,<sup>8</sup>  
 For she dop men lese here londe and here lyf bothe.  
 She leteth passe prisoneres, and payeth for hem ofte,  
 And gyveth þe gailers golde and grotes<sup>9</sup> togideres,  
 To unfettre þe fals — fle where hym lyketh !  
 15   And takeþ þe trewe bi þe toppe,<sup>10</sup> and tieth hym faste,  
 And hangeth hym for hatred þat harme dede nevre.  
 To be cursed in consistorie she counteth nouȝte a russhe ;  
 For she copeth<sup>11</sup> þe comissarie, and coteth<sup>12</sup> his clerkis ;  
 She is assoilled<sup>13</sup> as sone as hirself liketh,  
 20   And may neize as moche do in a moneth one<sup>14</sup>  
 As ȝowre secret seel in syx score dayes.  
 For she is prive<sup>15</sup> with þe Pope — provisoures<sup>16</sup> it knoweth —  
 For Sire Symonye and hirselve selet<sup>17</sup> hire bulles.  
 She blesseth pise bisshopes, þeige þey be lewed,  
 25   Provendreth persones,<sup>18</sup> and prestes meynnteneth  
 To have lemmannes and lotebies<sup>19</sup> alle here lifdayes,  
 And bringen forth barnes agein forbode<sup>20</sup> lawes.  
 There she is wel with þe kynge wo is þe rewme,

1 betrays

2 teaches to be

3 teaches

4 poisoned Popes

5 injured

6 jurymen

7 summoners

8 would be lost if it were not

for her

9 groats

10 top, head

11 provides a cope for

12 provides coats for

13 absolved

14 by herself

15 intimate

16 provisors (persons named  
by the Pope for a living  
not vacant)

17 seal

18 supports parsons

19 concubines

20 prohibitive

5. Ȝowre fadre: probably Edward II, father of Edward III (king at the time the first version was written).

For she is favorable to Fals,<sup>1</sup> and fouleth Trewthe ofte.  
 Bi Jesus, with here jeweles ȝowre justices she shendeth,<sup>2</sup>  
 And lith<sup>3</sup> aȝein þe lawe, and letteth hym þe gate<sup>4</sup>  
 That Feith may nouȝte have his forth,<sup>5</sup> here<sup>6</sup> floreines go so pikke.  
 She ledeth þe lawe as hire list, and love-dayes<sup>7</sup> maketh, 5  
 And doth men lese þorw hire love þat lawe myȝte wynne —  
 Þe mase<sup>8</sup> for a mene man, þouȝ he mote<sup>9</sup> evre.<sup>10</sup>  
 Lawe is so lordeliche, and loth to make ende,  
 Withoute presentz or pens she pleseth wel fewe.  
 Barounes and burgeys she bryngeth in sorwe, 10  
 And alle þe comune in kare þat coveyten lyve<sup>11</sup> in trewthe,  
 For Clergye<sup>12</sup> and Coveitise<sup>13</sup> she coupleth togideres.  
 Þis is þe lyf of that lady — now Lorde gif hir sorwe,  
 And alle that meynteneth here men, meschaunce hem bityde !  
 For pore men mowe have no powere to pleyne<sup>14</sup> hem, þouȝ þei smerte, 15  
 Suche a maistre is Mede amonge men of gode.'

## GLUTTONY

Now bigynneth Gloutoun<sup>15</sup> for to go to schrifte,  
 And kaires hym<sup>16</sup> to kirkeward,<sup>17</sup> his coupe<sup>18</sup> to schewe ;  
 Ac Beton þe brewestere bad hym good morwe,  
 And axed of hym with þat whiderward he wolde. 20  
 'To Holi Cherche,' quod he, 'for to here masse,  
 And sithen<sup>19</sup> I wil be shryven, and synne na more.'  
 'I have gode ale, gossib,' quod she ; 'Gloutoun, wiltow assaye ?'  
 'Hastow aȝte in þi purs<sup>20</sup> ? — any hote spices ?'  
 'I have peper and piones,<sup>21</sup>' quod she, 'and a pounde of garlike, 25  
 A ferthyngworth of fenel-seed for fastyng-dayes.'

<sup>1</sup> MS. the fals<sup>2</sup> destroys<sup>3</sup> lies<sup>4</sup> hinders him the way<sup>5</sup> egress<sup>6</sup> her<sup>7</sup> days for holding court, and settling differences<sup>8</sup> disappointment<sup>9</sup> plead, argue<sup>10</sup> MS. hir evre<sup>11</sup> desire to live<sup>12</sup> Learning<sup>13</sup> Avarice<sup>14</sup> make complaint<sup>15</sup> Glutton<sup>16</sup> repairs him<sup>17</sup> to church ; cf. (A.V.) 2 Cor. 1. 12 ; 1 Thess. 1. 8<sup>18</sup> guilt, sin<sup>19</sup> afterwards<sup>20</sup> pouch, wallet<sup>21</sup> peony-seeds

- þanne goth Glotoun in, and grete othes after ;  
 Cesse <sup>1</sup> þe souteresse <sup>2</sup> sat on þe benche,  
 Watte þe warner <sup>3</sup> and hys wyf bothe,  
 Tymme þe tynkere, and tweyne of his prentis, <sup>4</sup>  
 5 Hikke þe hakeneyman, <sup>5</sup> and Hughe þe nedeler, <sup>6</sup>  
 Clarice of Cokkeslane, <sup>7</sup> and þe clerke of þe cherche,  
 Dawe þe dykere, <sup>8</sup> and a dozeine other ;  
 Sire Piers of Pridie, and Peronelle <sup>9</sup> of Flaundres,  
 A ribibour, <sup>10</sup> a ratonere, <sup>11</sup> a raker of Chepe, <sup>12</sup>  
 10 A ropere, <sup>13</sup> a redyngkyng, <sup>14</sup> and Rose þe dissheres, <sup>15</sup>  
 Godfrey of Garlekehithe, <sup>16</sup> and Gryfin þe Walshe, <sup>17</sup>  
 And upholderes <sup>18</sup> an hepe erly bi þe morwe  
 Geven Glotoun with glad chere good ale to hansel. <sup>19</sup>  
 Clement þe cobelere cast of <sup>20</sup> his cloke,  
 15 And atte new faire <sup>21</sup> he nempned <sup>22</sup> it to selle ;  
 Hikke þe hakeneyman hitte <sup>23</sup> his hood after,  
 And badde Bette <sup>24</sup> þe bochere ben on his side.  
 Þere were chapmen ychose þis chaffare to preise <sup>25</sup> ;  
 Whoso haveth þe hood shuld have amendes of þe cloke.  
 20 Two risen up in rape, <sup>26</sup> and rouned <sup>27</sup> togideres,  
 And preised þese penyworthes apart bi himselve ;  
 Þei couth nougte bi her conscience acorden <sup>28</sup> in treuthe,  
 Tyl Robyn þe ropere arose bi þe southe,  
 And nempned hym for a noumpere <sup>29</sup> — þat no debate nere —

<sup>1</sup> short for Cicely, or Cecilia

<sup>2</sup> woman shoemaker

<sup>3</sup> gamekeeper

<sup>4</sup> apprentices

<sup>5</sup> man who keeps horses for hire

<sup>6</sup> needle-seller

<sup>7</sup> a region occupied by women of ill repute

<sup>8</sup> ditcher

<sup>9</sup> a proverbial name for a gaily dressed, bold-faced woman

<sup>10</sup> player on the rebeck

<sup>11</sup> rat-catcher

<sup>12</sup> street-sweeper of Cheap-side

<sup>13</sup> rope-maker

<sup>14</sup> retainer

<sup>15</sup> dish-seller

<sup>16</sup> a region on the bank of the Thames where garlic was sold

<sup>17</sup> Welshman

<sup>18</sup> furniture-brokers

<sup>19</sup> as an earnest or pledge (to propitiate him)

<sup>20</sup> off

<sup>21</sup> at the new fair (to chaffer at the new fair = to exchange)

<sup>22</sup> named

<sup>23</sup> threw down

<sup>24</sup> Bartholomew

<sup>25</sup> appraise, value

<sup>26</sup> haste

<sup>27</sup> whispered

<sup>28</sup> agree

<sup>29</sup> an umpire

x. in : Skeat suggests that the scene may be the Boar's Head, in Eastcheap (cf. *King Henry IV*).

For to trye þis chaffare bitwixen hem þre.  
 Hikke þe hostellere<sup>1</sup> hadde þe cloke,  
 In covenante þat Clement shulde þe cuppe fille,  
 And have Hikkes hode hostellere,<sup>2</sup> and holde hym yserved<sup>3</sup>;  
 And whoso repented rather<sup>4</sup> shulde arise after, 5  
 And grete Sire Glotoun with a galoun ale.  
 Þere was laughyng and louryng,<sup>5</sup> and 'Let go þe cuppe!'  
 And seten so til evensonge, and songen umwhile,<sup>6</sup>  
 Tyl Glotoun had yglobbed<sup>7</sup> a galoun an a jille.<sup>8</sup> . . .  
 He myzte neither steppe ne stonde er he his staffe hadde; 10  
 And þanne gan he go liche a glewmannes bicche,<sup>9</sup>  
 Somme tyme aside, and somme tyme arrere,<sup>10</sup>  
 As whoso leyth lynes for to lacche foules.<sup>11</sup>  
 And whan he drowgh to þe dore, þanne dymmed his eighen;  
 He stumbled on þe thresshewolde, an threwe<sup>12</sup> to þe erthe. 15  
 Clement þe cobelere caugte hym bi þe myddel,  
 For to lifte hym alofte, and leyde him on his knowes.<sup>13</sup> . . .  
 With al þe wo of þis worlde, his wyf and his wenche  
 Baren hym home to his bedde, and brougte hym þerinne;  
 And after al þis excesse, he had an accidie,<sup>14</sup> 20  
 þat he slepe Saterdag and Sonday til sonne gede<sup>15</sup> to reste.  
 þanne waked he of his wynkyng,<sup>16</sup> and wipede his eyghen;  
 þe fyrste worde þat he warpe<sup>17</sup> was: 'Where is þe bolle<sup>18</sup>?'  
 His wif gan edwite<sup>19</sup> hym þo how wikkedlich he lyved,  
 And Repentance rigte so rebuked hym þat tyme. 25

1 an innkeeper (who also let horses for hire; cf. 346 5, 16)

2 the hood of Hikke the innkeeper

3 contented

4 soonest

5 scowling

6 at intervals

7 gulped down

8 gill

9 a (blind) minstrel's dog

10 backwards

11 catch birds

12 fell

13 knees

14 fit of sloth

15 went

16 slumber

17 uttered

18 cup, bowl

19 reproach

## SLOTH THE PARSON

- þanne come Sleuthe<sup>1</sup> al bislabeled,<sup>2</sup> with two slymy eigen,  
 'I most sitte,' seyde þe segge,<sup>3</sup> 'or elles shulde I nappe;  
 I may nouȝte stonde ne stoupe, ne withoute a stole<sup>4</sup> knele.  
 Were I brouȝte abedde, . . .  
 5 Sholde no ryngynge do me ryse ar I were rype to dyne.'  
 He bygan 'Benedicite' with a bolke,<sup>5</sup> and his brest knocked,  
 And roxed<sup>6</sup> and rored, and rutte<sup>7</sup> atte laste.  
 'What! awake, renke<sup>8</sup>!' quod Repentance, 'and rape<sup>9</sup> þe to shrifte.'  
 'If I shulde deye bi<sup>10</sup> þis day, me liste<sup>11</sup> nouȝte to loke;  
 10 I can nouȝte perfytly my Pater Noster, as þe prest it syngeth,  
 But I can rymes of Robyn Hood, and Randolf Erle of Chestre,<sup>12</sup>  
 Ac neither of owre Lorde ne of owre Lady, þe leste þat evere was made.  
 I have made vowes fourty, and forȝete hem on þe morne;  
 I parfourned<sup>13</sup> nevere penaunce, as þe prest me higte,  
 15 Ne ryȝte sori for my synnes ȝet was I nevere;  
 And ȝif I bidde any bedes,<sup>14</sup> but-if it be in wrath,  
 þat I telle with my tonge is two myle fro myne herte.  
 I am occupied eche day — haliday and other —  
 With ydel tales atte ale, and otherwhile in cherches;  
 20 Goddes payne and his passioun — ful selde þynke I þereon.  
 I visited nevere fieble men, ne fettered folke in puttes<sup>15</sup>;  
 I have levere here an harlotrie,<sup>16</sup> or a somer-game of souteres,<sup>17</sup>  
 Or lesynges<sup>18</sup> to laughe at, and belye my neighbore,  
 þan al þat evere Marke made, Mathew, John, and Lucas;  
 25 And vigilies and fastyng-dayes — alle þise late I passe,<sup>19</sup>  
 And ligge abedde in Lenten, an[d] my lemman in myn armes,  
 Tyl matynes and masse be do, and þanne go to þe freres;

<sup>1</sup> sloth<sup>2</sup> bedabbled<sup>3</sup> creature<sup>4</sup> stool<sup>5</sup> belch<sup>6</sup> stretched himself<sup>7</sup> snored<sup>8</sup> man<sup>9</sup> hasten<sup>10</sup> within<sup>11</sup> would please<sup>12</sup> 1181-1231<sup>13</sup> performed<sup>14</sup> offer any petitions<sup>15</sup> dungeons<sup>16</sup> a tale of harlotry<sup>17</sup> summer-game played by shoemakers, consisting of athletic sports, etc.<sup>18</sup> lying tales<sup>19</sup> I let pass, pay no heed to

Come I to 'Ite, missa est,'<sup>1</sup> I holde me yserved.<sup>2</sup>

I nam nougte shryven some tyme — but-if sekenesse it make<sup>3</sup> —  
Nougt tweies in two zere, and þanne up gesse<sup>4</sup> I schryve me.

I have be<sup>5</sup> prest and persoun passynge thretti wynter,  
Zete can I neither solfe<sup>6</sup> ne synge, ne seyntes lyves rede; 5

But I can fynde in a felde or in a fourlonge<sup>7</sup> an hare,  
Better þan in *Beatus vir*<sup>8</sup> or in *Beati omnes*<sup>9</sup>

Construe oon clause wel, and kenne<sup>10</sup> it to my parochienes.

I can holde love-dayes, and here a reves rekenynge,  
Ac in canoun<sup>11</sup> ne in þe decretales<sup>12</sup> I can nougte rede a lyne. 10

Ȝif I bigge<sup>13</sup> and borwe<sup>14</sup> it — but-ȝif it be ytailled<sup>15</sup> —

I forȝete it as ȝerne<sup>16</sup>; and ȝif men me it axe

Sixe sithes or sevene, I forsake<sup>17</sup> it with othes,

And þus tene<sup>18</sup> I trewe men ten hundreth tymes.

And my servauntz — some tyme her salarye is bihynde; 15

Reuthe<sup>19</sup> is to here þe rekenynge whan we shal rede acomptes;

So with wikked wille and wraththe my werkmen I paye.

Ȝif any man doth me a benfait, or helpeth me at nede,  
I am unkynde aȝein<sup>20</sup> his curteisye, and can nougte understonde it;

For I have and have hadde somedeles<sup>21</sup> haukes maneres: 20

I nam nougte lured with love, but þere ligge<sup>22</sup> auȝte<sup>23</sup> under þe thombe.

The kyndenesse þat myne evene-Cristene<sup>24</sup> kidde me fernyere,<sup>25</sup>

Sixty sythes I, Sleuthe, have forȝete it sith;

In speche and in sparynge of speche yspilte<sup>26</sup> many a tyme

Bothe flesche and fische, and many other vitailles, 25

Bothe bred and ale, butter, melke, and chese —

Forsleuthed<sup>27</sup> in my servyse, til it myȝte serve no man.

I ran aboute in ȝouthe, and ȝaf me nougte to lerne,

And evere sith have be beggere, for my foule sleuthe;

1 the closing words of the mass

2 satisfied

3 unless sickness bring it about

4 by guesswork

5 been

6 sol-fa, i.e. sing by note

7 lot (of land)

8 Ps. 1 or 112

9 Ps. 128

10 explain

11 canon law

12 decretals — a collection  
of Popes' edicts

13 buy anything

14 give a pledge for it

15 marked on a tally

16 quickly (as may be)

17 deny

18 injure

19 pity

20 in response to

21 to some extent

22 lie

23 The lure was often baited  
with meat

24 fellow-Christian

25 showed me formerly

26 wasted

27 wasted by carelessness

*Heu michi, quod sterilem vitam duxi juvenilem !*

'Repentestow þe nauhte?' quod Repentance, and rigte with þat he  
swowned,

Til *Vigilate*,<sup>1</sup> þe veille,<sup>2</sup> fette<sup>3</sup> water at his eygen,

And flatte<sup>4</sup> it on his face, and faste on hym criede,

5 And seide: 'Ware þe fram Wanhope,<sup>5</sup> wolde<sup>6</sup> þe bitraye!

"I am sori for my synnes" — sey so to þiselve,

And bete þiselve on þe breste, and bidde hym<sup>7</sup> of grace;

For is no gult<sup>8</sup> here so grete þat his goodnesse nys more.'

þanne sat Sleuthe up, and seyned<sup>9</sup> hym swithe,<sup>10</sup>

10 And made avowe tofore<sup>11</sup> God for his foule sleuthe:

'Shal no Sondaye be þis sevene gere — but sykenesse it lette<sup>12</sup> —

þat I ne shal do<sup>13</sup> me er day to þe dere cherche,

And heren matines and masse, as I a monke were;

Shal none ale<sup>14</sup> after mete holde me þennes

15 Tyl I have evensonge herde, I behote to þe rode.<sup>15</sup>

And ȝete wil I ȝelde agein<sup>16</sup> — if I so moche have —

Al þat I wikkedly wan sithen I wytte hadde.

And þough my liflode lakke,<sup>17</sup> leten I nelle<sup>18</sup>

þat eche man ne shal have his, ar I hennes wende;

20 And with þe residue and þe remenaunt, bi þe Rode of Chestre!

I shal seke treuthe arst,<sup>19</sup> ar I se Rome!

## PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Now is Perkyn<sup>20</sup> and his pilgrymes to þe plowe faren<sup>21</sup>;

To erie<sup>22</sup> þis halve-acre holpyn hym manye.

Dikeres and delveres digged up þe balkes<sup>23</sup>;

25 þerewith was Perkyn apayed,<sup>24</sup> and preysed hem faste.

Other werkemen þere were þat wrougten ful ȝerne,<sup>25</sup>

1 Cf. Mk. 13. 37

2 watcher

3 fetched

4 dashed

5 despair

6 who would

7 God

8 guilt, sin

9 signed (crossed)

10 quickly

11 before

12 prevent

13 betake

14 alehouse

15 vow to the cross

16 repay

17 means of living fail

18 cease I will not

19 first

20 little Piers (Peterkin)

21 gone

22 plow

23 ridges of land left unplowed

24 pleased

25 zealously



Eche man in his manere made hymself to done,  
 And some, to plese Perkyn, piked up þe wedes.  
 At heighe pryme<sup>1</sup> Peres lete þe plowe stonde,  
 To oversen hem hymself; and whoso best wrougte,  
 He shulde be huyred þerafter, whan hervest-tyme come.

5

And þanne seten somme, and songen atte nale,<sup>2</sup>  
 And hulpen erie his half acre with 'How! trolli-lolli!'  
 'Now, bi þe peril of my soule!' quod Pieres al in pure tene<sup>3</sup>:  
 'But ge arise þe rather,<sup>4</sup> and rape<sup>5</sup> zow to worche,  
 Shal no greyne þat groweth glade zow at nede;  
 And þough ge deye for dole, þe devel have þat reccheth<sup>6</sup>!'

10

Tho were faitoures<sup>7</sup> aferde, and feyned hem blynde,  
 Somme leyde here legges aliri,<sup>8</sup> as suche loseles conneth,<sup>9</sup>  
 And made her mone to Pieres, and preyde hym of grace:  
 'For we have no lymes to laboure with, lorde, ygraced be ge!  
 Ac we preye for zow, Pieres, and for zowre plow bothe,  
 þat God of his grace zowre grayne multiplie,  
 And zelde zow of<sup>10</sup> zowre almesse þat ge give us here;  
 For we may nouzte swynke ne swete, suche sikennesse us eyleth.'  
 'If it be soth,' quod Pieres, 'þat ge seyne, I shal it sone asspye!  
 Ze ben wastoures,<sup>11</sup> I wote wel, and Treuthe wote þe sothe!  
 And I am his olde hyne,<sup>12</sup> and higte hym to warne  
 Which þei were in pis worlde his werkemen appeyred.<sup>13</sup>

15

20

Ze wasten þat men wynnen with travaille and with tene,  
 Ac Treuthe shal teche zow his teme to dryve,  
 Or ge shal ete barly bred, and of þe broke drynke;  
 But if he be blynde or broke-legged, or bolted with yrnys,<sup>14</sup>  
 He shal ete whete bred, and drynke with myselve,  
 Tyl God of his goodnesse amendement hym sende.  
 Ac ge myzte travaille as Treuthe wolde, and take mete and huyre  
 To kepe kyne<sup>15</sup> in þe felde, þe corne fro þe bestes,

25

30

<sup>1</sup> Probably about 9 A.M.

<sup>2</sup> at their ale

<sup>3</sup> vexation, grief

<sup>4</sup> more quickly

<sup>5</sup> haste

<sup>6</sup> take him who cares

<sup>7</sup> vagabonds

<sup>8</sup> crosswise

<sup>9</sup> wretched idlers know how

to do

<sup>10</sup> requite you for

<sup>11</sup> spendthrifts

<sup>12</sup> servant

<sup>13</sup> those who in this world de-  
moralized his workmen

<sup>14</sup> supported with iron supports

<sup>15</sup> cattle

- Diken or delven, or dyngen <sup>1</sup> uppon sheves,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or helpe make mortar, or bere mukke afelde.  
 In lecherye and in losengerye <sup>3</sup> ze lyven, and in sleuthe —  
 And al is þow suffrance þat venjaunce gow ne taketh.
- 5 Ac ancre and heremytes, þat eten noȝt but at nones,<sup>4</sup>  
 And na more er morwe,<sup>5</sup> myne almesse shul þei have,  
 And of my catel <sup>6</sup> to cope hem with þat han cloistres and cherches.  
 Ac Robert Renneaboute shal nowȝte have of myne,  
 Ne posteles,<sup>7</sup> but <sup>8</sup> þey preche conne, and have powere <sup>9</sup> of þe bisschop ;
- 10 They shal have payne <sup>10</sup> and potage, and make himself at ese,  
 For it is an unresonable religioun þat hath riȝte nouȝte of certeyne.<sup>11</sup>

## PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S CREED

Among the poems which owe their origin to *Piers Plowman* is *Piers the Plowman's Creed*, written by an unknown author soon after 1393. It runs thus: An unlearned man who has got by heart the Paternoster and Ave Maria, wishes also to know the Creed, and seeks a teacher. He applies in turn to friars of each of the four orders. Each rails at the other orders, and promises that the questioner shall be saved without knowledge of the Creed, if he contribute to the expenses of the monastery. The man leaves them with indignation at their magnificent buildings and luxurious lives, and finally comes upon a poor plowman, who joins him in invective against friars of all orders. Skeat suggests that the keynote of the poem is to be found at the beginning of Passus 9 (A), 8 (B), 11 (C) of *Piers Plowman*.

This poem was first printed in 1553. Our text, however, is taken, not from that of 1553, but from Skeat's edition (E.E.T.S. 30) of MS. Camb. Trin. Coll. R. 3. 15 (adopting Skeat's emendations without comment), which, though later than 1553, he concludes to be based on a much earlier manuscript. Our selections embrace lines 98-137, 153-242, 420-42, 546-64, 719-61, and 775-8.

- ' Alas! frere,' quap I þo,<sup>12</sup> ' my purpos is ifailed ;  
 Now is my counfort acast.<sup>13</sup> Canstou no bote <sup>14</sup> —  
 Where Y myȝte meten wiþ a man þat myȝte me wissen <sup>15</sup>  
 15 For to conne my crede, Crist for to folwen ? '

<sup>1</sup> thresh<sup>2</sup> sheaves<sup>3</sup> lying, flattering<sup>4</sup> noon<sup>5</sup> till the next morning<sup>6</sup> substance<sup>7</sup> apostles<sup>8</sup> unless<sup>9</sup> license<sup>10</sup> bread, food<sup>11</sup> has no established order<sup>12</sup> then<sup>13</sup> cast away, lost<sup>14</sup> do you know no remedy<sup>15</sup> teach

'Certeine, felawe,' quap þe frere, 'wiþouten any failē:  
 Of all men opon mold, we Menures<sup>1</sup> most scheweþ  
 Þe pure apostelles life, wiþ penaunce on erþe,  
 And suen<sup>2</sup> hem in sanctite, and suffren well harde.  
 We haunten none tavernes, ne hobelen<sup>3</sup> abouten ; 5  
 At marketts and myracles<sup>4</sup> we medleþ us nevere ;  
 We hondlen no money, but menelich<sup>5</sup> faren,  
 And haven hunger at the meate — at ich a mel ones.  
 We haven forsaken the worlde, and in wo lybbeþ,<sup>6</sup>  
 In penaunce and poverte ; and precheþ þe puple, 10  
 By ensample of oure life, soules to helpen ;  
 And in povertie praien for all oure parteners<sup>7</sup>  
 Þat ȝyveþ us any good, God to honouren —  
 Oþer bell, oþer booke, or breed to our fode,  
 Other catell,<sup>8</sup> oþer cloth to coveren wiþ our bones,<sup>9</sup> 15  
 Money, or money-worthe — here mede<sup>10</sup> is in heven.  
 For we buldeþ a burwz,<sup>11</sup> a brod and a large :  
 A chirche and a chapaile, with chambres alofte,  
 Wiþ wide windowes ywrougt, and walles wel heye,  
 Þat mote bene portreid and paynt, and pulched<sup>12</sup> ful clene ; 20  
 With gaie glittering glas, glowing as þe sonne ;  
 And, myȝtestou amenden us wiþ money of þyn owne,  
 Þou chuldest cnely<sup>13</sup> bfore Crist in compas<sup>14</sup> of gold,  
 In þe wide windowe westwarde — wel nige in the myddell —  
 And Seynt Fraunces himself schall folden the in his cope, 25  
 And presente the to the Trynitie, and praie for thy synnes ;  
 Þi name schall noblich ben wryten and wrougt, for the nones,<sup>15</sup>  
 And, in remembrance of þe, yrade<sup>16</sup> þer for ever.  
 And, broþer, be þou nougt aferd ; bythenk in thyn herte ;  
 Þouȝ þou conne nougt þi crede, kare þou no more ; 30

<sup>1</sup> Minorites<sup>2</sup> follow<sup>3</sup> loaf<sup>4</sup> miracle-plays<sup>5</sup> meanly<sup>6</sup> live<sup>7</sup> those who share with us<sup>8</sup> property, goods<sup>9</sup> our bones with<sup>10</sup> their reward<sup>11</sup> large convent (*lit.* borough)<sup>12</sup> polished<sup>13</sup> kneel<sup>14</sup> circle, ring ; with this whole  
passage compare *Piers  
Plowman*, 341 23-26<sup>15</sup> for the occasion<sup>16</sup> read

I schal asoilen <sup>1</sup> þe, syre, and setten it on my soule,  
 And þou maie maken þis good ; þenk þou non oþer.<sup>2</sup>  
 'Sire,' Y saide, 'in certaine Y schal gon and asaye.'  
 And he sette on me his honde, and asoilede me clene ;  
 5 And þeir Y parted him fro, wiþouten any peine ;  
 In covenant þat Y come agen, Crist he me betauhte.<sup>3</sup> . . .  
 Þanne þougt Y to frayne <sup>4</sup> þe first <sup>5</sup> of þis foure ordirs,  
 And presede <sup>6</sup> to þe prechoures to proven <sup>7</sup> here wille.  
 Ich higede <sup>8</sup> to her house to herken of more,  
 10 And whan Y cam to þat court, Y gaped aboute.  
 Swich a bild <sup>9</sup> bold, ybult opon erþe heigte,<sup>10</sup>  
 Say <sup>11</sup> I nougt in certaine sippe a longe tyme.  
 Y gemede <sup>12</sup> upon þat house, and gerne <sup>13</sup> þeron loked,  
 Whouȝ <sup>14</sup> þe pileres weren ypeynt and pulched ful clene,  
 15 And queynteli icorven wiþ curiouse knottes,<sup>15</sup>  
 Wiþ wyndowes well ywrouȝt, wide up olofte.  
 And þanne Y entrid in and evenforþ <sup>16</sup> went,  
 And all was walled þat wone,<sup>17</sup> þouȝ it wid were,  
 Wiþ posternes in pryvytie <sup>18</sup> to pasen <sup>19</sup> when hem liste,  
 20 Orchezardes and erberes <sup>20</sup> evesed <sup>21</sup> well clene,  
 And a curious cros craftly entayled,<sup>22</sup>  
 Wiþ tabernacles <sup>23</sup> ytigt <sup>24</sup> to toten <sup>25</sup> all abouten.  
 Þe pris <sup>26</sup> of a plougland, of <sup>27</sup> penyes so rounde,  
 To aparaile <sup>28</sup> þat pyler were pure <sup>29</sup> lytel.  
 25 Þanne Y munte <sup>30</sup> me forþ þe mynstre to knowen,  
 And awaytede a woon <sup>31</sup> wonderlie well ybeld,<sup>32</sup>

1 absolve

2 no otherwise

3 he commended me to Christ

4 question

5 the Dominicans

6 pressed forward, hastened

7 make trial of

8 hied me

9 building

10 a height of earth, an elevation

11 saw

12 gazed attentively

13 eagerly

14 how

15 bosses

16 straight ahead

17 dwelling-place

18 private posterns

19 go out

20 gardens

21 bordered

22 carved

23 cells

24 fixed, arranged

25 spy

26 price

27 in

28 furnish forth, provide for

29 very

30 ventured

31 perceived a building

32 built

8. prechoures : the Dominicans were called Preachers.

Wiþ arches on everiche half,<sup>1</sup> and belliche<sup>2</sup> ycorven,  
 Wiþ crochetes<sup>3</sup> on corners wiþ knottes of golde,  
 Wyde wyndowes ywrougt, ywritten full pikke,<sup>4</sup>  
 Schynen wiþ schapen scheldes<sup>5</sup> to schewen aboute,  
 Wiþ merkes<sup>6</sup> of marchauntes ymedled<sup>7</sup> bytwene, 5  
 Mo þan twenty and two twyes ynoubred.  
 Þer is none heraud<sup>8</sup> þat haþ half swich a rolle —  
 Rigt as a rageman<sup>9</sup> hadde<sup>10</sup> rekned hem newe.  
 Tombes opon tabernacles tyld opon lofte,<sup>11</sup>  
 Housed in hirnes<sup>12</sup> harde set abouten, 10  
 Of armede alabaustre clad for þe nones,  
 Made upon marbel in many maner wyse;  
 Knyghtes in her conisantes<sup>13</sup> clad for þe nones;  
 All it semed seyntes, ysacred<sup>14</sup> opon erþe,  
 And lovely ladies ywrougt leyen by her sydes, 15  
 In many gay garmentes, þat weren goldbeten.<sup>15</sup>  
 Pouȝ þe tax of ten ġer were trewly ygadered,  
 Nolde it nouȝt maken þat hous half, as Y trowe.  
 Þanne kam I to þat cloister and gaped abouten,  
 Whouȝ it was pilered and peynt and portred well clene, 20  
 All shyled wiþ leed<sup>16</sup> lowe to þe stones,  
 And ypaved wiþ peynt til<sup>17</sup> iche poynte<sup>18</sup> after oþer;  
 Wiþ kundites<sup>19</sup> of clene tyn<sup>20</sup> closed all aboute,  
 Wiþ lavoures<sup>21</sup> of latun<sup>22</sup> lovelyche ygreithed.<sup>23</sup>  
 I trowe þe gaynage<sup>24</sup> of þe ground in a gret schire 25  
 Nolde aparaille þat place oo poynt til other ende.<sup>25</sup>  
 Þanne was þe chaptire-hous wrougt as a greet chirche,  
 Corven and covered, and queyntliche entayled,<sup>26</sup>

<sup>1</sup> side<sup>2</sup> beautifully<sup>3</sup> crockets<sup>4</sup> with many inscriptions<sup>5</sup> coats of arms wrought<sup>6</sup> symbols, badges<sup>7</sup> interspersed<sup>8</sup> herald<sup>9</sup> catalogue<sup>10</sup> MS. haþ<sup>11</sup> set up on high<sup>12</sup> enclosed in corners<sup>13</sup> cognizances<sup>14</sup> sanctified, consecrated<sup>15</sup> adorned with beaten gold<sup>16</sup> covered with lead<sup>17</sup> painted tiles<sup>18</sup> piece, bit<sup>19</sup> conduits<sup>20</sup> tin<sup>21</sup> lavers<sup>22</sup> latoun, a kind of brass<sup>23</sup> prepared<sup>24</sup> produce<sup>25</sup> would not fit out that place  
one bit towards the other  
end<sup>26</sup> sculptured

Wip semlich selure<sup>1</sup> yset on lofte,  
As a Parlement Hous ypeynted aboute.

þanne ferd<sup>2</sup> Y into fraytour,<sup>3</sup> and fond þere anoper,  
An halle for an heyȝ kinge an housholde to holden,  
5 Wip brode bordes<sup>4</sup> aboute ybenched<sup>5</sup> wel clene,  
Wip windowes of glas wrouȝt as a chirche.

þanne walkede Y ferrer, and went all abouten,  
And seȝ halles ful hyȝe, and houses full noble,  
Chambers wip chymneyes, and chapells gaie,  
10 And kychens for an hyȝe kinge in castells to holden,  
And her dortour<sup>6</sup> ydigte<sup>7</sup> wip dores ful stronge,  
Fermery<sup>8</sup> and fraitur, with fele mo houses,  
And a<sup>9</sup> strong ston wall, sterne opon heiȝe,<sup>10</sup>  
Wip gaie garites<sup>11</sup> and grete, and iche hole yglased,  
15 And opere houses ynowe to herberwe þe queene;  
And ȝet þise bileres wilne beggen a baggful of wheate  
Of a pure pore<sup>12</sup> man þat maie oneȝe<sup>13</sup> paie  
Half his rente in a ȝer, and half ben behynde.

þanne turned Y aȝen, whan Y hadde all ytoted,<sup>14</sup>  
20 And fond in a freitour a frere on a benche,  
A greet cherl and a grym, growen as a tonne,<sup>15</sup>  
Wip a face as fat as a full bledder  
Blowen bretfull<sup>16</sup> of breȝ, and as a bagge honged<sup>17</sup>  
On boȝen his chekes, and his chyn wip a chol<sup>18</sup> lollede,<sup>19</sup>  
25 As greet as a gos-eye,<sup>20</sup> growen all of grece;  
þat<sup>21</sup> all wagged his fleche<sup>22</sup> as a quyk myre.<sup>23</sup>  
His cope þat biclypped<sup>24</sup> him, wel clene<sup>25</sup> was it folden,  
Of double worstede<sup>26</sup> ydyȝt,<sup>27</sup> doun to þe hele;

1 ceiling

2 went

3 the refectory

4 tables

5 furnished with benches

6 dormitory

7 provided

8 infirmary

9 MS. all

10 stern on a height

11 garrets

12 very poor

13 with difficulty

14 observed

15 as large as a tun

16 brimful

17 it hung

18 jowl

19 wagged about

20 goose-egg

21 so that

22 flesh

23 like a quagmire

24 covered

25 neatly

26 Cf. Chaucer, *Prolog.* 262

27 made

His kyrtel of clene whiit, clenlyche <sup>1</sup> ysewed ;

Hyt was good ynow of ground <sup>2</sup> greyn <sup>3</sup> for to beren.

I haylsede <sup>4</sup> þat herdeman, <sup>5</sup> and hendliche <sup>6</sup> Y saide :

' Gode syre, for Godes love canstou me graip <sup>7</sup> tellen <sup>8</sup>

To any worþely wiigt <sup>9</sup> þat wissen <sup>10</sup> me couþe

5

Whou <sup>11</sup> Y schulde conne my crede, Crist for to folowe,

þat levede lelliche <sup>12</sup> himself, and lyvede þerafter ;

þat feynede non falshede, but fully Crist suwede <sup>13</sup> ?

For sich a certeyn man syker wold Y trosten <sup>14</sup>

þat he wolde telle me þe trewþe, and turne to none oþer.

10

And an Austyn þis ender <sup>15</sup> daie egged <sup>16</sup> me faste ;

þat he wolde techen me wel he plygt me his treuþe,

And seyde me : " Serteyne, syþen Crist died,

Oure ordir was evelles <sup>17</sup> and erst <sup>18</sup> yfounde." . . .

And as Y wente be þe waie, wepyng for sorowe,

15

I seiz a sely <sup>19</sup> man me by opon þe plow hongen.

His cote was of a cloute <sup>20</sup> þat cary <sup>21</sup> was ycalled ;

His hod <sup>22</sup> was full of holes, and his heer oute ;

Wiþ his knopped schon, <sup>23</sup> clouted full þykke, <sup>24</sup>

His ton todeden out <sup>25</sup> as he þe londe treddede ;

20

His hosen overhongen his hokschyne <sup>26</sup> on everiche a side,

Al beslobbred <sup>27</sup> in fen, <sup>28</sup> as he þe plow folwede ;

Twey myteynes <sup>29</sup> as mete, <sup>30</sup> maad all of cloutes —

þe fyngers weren forwerd, <sup>31</sup> and ful of fen honged.

þis whit <sup>32</sup> waseled <sup>33</sup> in þe fen almost to þe ancle ;

25

Four e roþeren <sup>34</sup> hym byform þat feble were worþen <sup>35</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> neatly

<sup>2</sup> texture

<sup>3</sup> color, dye

<sup>4</sup> saluted

<sup>5</sup> shepherd, pastor

<sup>6</sup> courteously

<sup>7</sup> readily

<sup>8</sup> direct

<sup>9</sup> worthy person

<sup>10</sup> teach

<sup>11</sup> how

<sup>12</sup> believed faithfully

<sup>13</sup> followed

<sup>14</sup> trust

<sup>15</sup> other

<sup>16</sup> urged

<sup>17</sup> evil-less

<sup>18</sup> first

<sup>19</sup> simple

<sup>20</sup> a ragged cloth

<sup>21</sup> name of a coarse material

<sup>22</sup> hood

<sup>23</sup> shoes full of knobs or

roughnesses

<sup>24</sup> in tatters

<sup>25</sup> toes peeped out

<sup>26</sup> the under side of the thighs

<sup>27</sup> bedaubed; MS. beslombered

<sup>28</sup> mud

<sup>29</sup> mittens

<sup>30</sup> suitable

<sup>31</sup> worn out

<sup>32</sup> fellow (wight)

<sup>33</sup> bemired himself

<sup>34</sup> heifers

<sup>35</sup> become

- Men myȝte reken ich a ryb,<sup>1</sup> so reufull<sup>2</sup> þey weren.  
 His wiif walked him wiþ, wiþ a longe gode,<sup>3</sup>  
 In a cutted<sup>4</sup> cote<sup>5</sup> cutted full heyge,  
 Wrapped in a wynwe-schete<sup>6</sup> to weren<sup>7</sup> hire fro weders,<sup>8</sup>  
 5 Barfote on þe bare iis, þat þe blod folwede.  
 And at þe londes<sup>9</sup> ende laye a litell crombolle,<sup>10</sup>  
 And þeron lay a litell childe, lapped in cloutes,  
 And tweyne of tweie ȝeres olde, opon anoper syde ;  
 And alle þey songen o songe, þat sorwe was to heren ;  
 10 Þey crieden alle o cry — a carefull<sup>11</sup> note.  
 Þe sely man sizede sore, and seide : ' Children, beþ stille.' . . .  
 Loke nowe, leve<sup>12</sup> man, beþ nouȝt þise ilyke  
 Fully to þe Farisens<sup>13</sup> in fele<sup>14</sup> of þise poyntes ?  
 Al her brod beldyng<sup>15</sup> ben belded withe synne,  
 15 And in worchipe of þe werlde her wynnynge þei holden.  
 Þei schapen her chapolories,<sup>16</sup> and streccheþ hem brode<sup>17</sup>  
 And launceþ<sup>18</sup> heize her hemmes wiþ babelyng<sup>19</sup> in strates ;  
 Þei ben ysewed wiþ whigt silk, and semes full queynte,  
 Ystongen<sup>20</sup> wiþ stiches þat stareþ as silver.  
 20 And but<sup>21</sup> freres ben first yset at sopers and at festes,  
 Þei wiln ben wonderly wroþ, ywis, as Y trowe ;  
 But þey ben at þe lordes borde, louren<sup>22</sup> þey willeþ,  
 He mot bygynne þat borde,<sup>23</sup> a beggere<sup>24</sup> — wiþ sorwe<sup>25</sup> ! —  
 And first sitten in se<sup>26</sup> in her synagoges,<sup>27</sup>  
 25 þat beþ here heyge hellehous of Kaymes<sup>28</sup> kynde ;  
 For þoug a man in her mynster a masse wolde heren,  
 His siȝt schal so be set on sundrye werkes,

<sup>1</sup> count each rib<sup>2</sup> miserable, sorry-looking<sup>3</sup> goad<sup>4</sup> cut short<sup>5</sup> skirt, petticoat<sup>6</sup> a sheet used in winnowing corn<sup>7</sup> protect<sup>8</sup> storms<sup>9</sup> strip's<sup>10</sup> crumb-bowl<sup>11</sup> full of misery<sup>12</sup> dear<sup>13</sup> Pharisees<sup>14</sup> many<sup>15</sup> building<sup>16</sup> scapulars<sup>17</sup> Matt. 23. 5-7<sup>18</sup> fling<sup>19</sup> babbling<sup>20</sup> pricked through<sup>21</sup> unless<sup>22</sup> look sourly<sup>23</sup> sit at the head of the table<sup>24</sup> beggar that he is (perhaps with allusion to the begging friars)<sup>25</sup> bad luck to him<sup>26</sup> seat<sup>27</sup> churches<sup>28</sup> Cain's (CAIM = Carmelites Augustinians, Jacobins, Minorites — the four orders of friars)



þe penounes,<sup>1</sup> and þe pomels,<sup>2</sup> and poyntes<sup>3</sup> of scheldes  
 Wipdrawen his devocion, and dusken<sup>4</sup> his herte ;  
 I likne it to a lymgerde<sup>5</sup> to drawen men to hell. . . .

þei usen russet<sup>6</sup> also, somme of þis freres,  
 þat bitokneþ travaile and treweþe opon erþe. 5  
 Bote loke whou þis lorels<sup>7</sup> labouren þe erþe,  
 But freten<sup>8</sup> þe frute þat þe folk full lellich biswynkeþ<sup>9</sup> ;  
 Wip travail of trewe men þei tymbren<sup>10</sup> her houses,  
 And of curious<sup>11</sup> clope her copes þei biggen<sup>12</sup> ;  
 And als<sup>13</sup> his getyng is greet he schal ben good holden ; 10  
 And rygt as dranes<sup>14</sup> doþ nougt but drynkeþ up þe huny,  
 Whan been<sup>15</sup> wipe her bysynesse han brougt it to hepe,  
 Rigt so fareþ freres wip folke opon erþe :  
 þey freten up þe fu[r]ste froyt,<sup>16</sup> and falsliche lybbeþ.  
 But alle freres eten nougt ylich good mete, 15  
 But after þat his wynnyng is, is his wellfare ;  
 And after þat he bringeþ home, his bed schal ben grayped<sup>17</sup> ;  
 And after þat his rychesse is raugt,<sup>18</sup> he schal ben redy served.  
 But see piself in þi sigt whou somme of hem walkeþ  
 Wip cloutede<sup>19</sup> schon, and clopes ful feble, 20  
 Wel neig forwerd,<sup>20</sup> and þe wlon<sup>21</sup> offe ;  
 And his felawe in a froke worþ swiche fiftene,<sup>22</sup>  
 Arayd in rede sc[h]on — and elles were reupe<sup>23</sup> —  
 And sexe copes or seven in his celle hongep.  
 þouȝ for fayling of good his fellawe schulde sterve,<sup>24</sup> 25  
 He wolde nougt lenen<sup>25</sup> him a peny his liif for to holden.  
 Y migt tymen þo troiflarden<sup>26</sup> to toilen wip þe erþe,  
 Tylyen,<sup>27</sup> and treweliche lyven, and her flech tempren !

<sup>1</sup> pennons<sup>2</sup> pommels, bosses<sup>3</sup> divisions<sup>4</sup> darken, cloud<sup>5</sup> a limed twig<sup>6</sup> The Franciscans wore gray  
habits originally, but later  
russet-brown<sup>7</sup> good-for-nothings<sup>8</sup> devour<sup>9</sup> faithfully obtain by labor<sup>10</sup> build<sup>11</sup> MS. þe curious<sup>12</sup> fashion (?) ; buy (?)<sup>13</sup> according as<sup>14</sup> drones<sup>15</sup> bees<sup>16</sup> first-fruits<sup>17</sup> prepared<sup>18</sup> reached, obtained<sup>19</sup> patched<sup>20</sup> worn out<sup>21</sup> borders, hems<sup>22</sup> fifteen of such<sup>23</sup> a pity<sup>24</sup> die<sup>25</sup> lend, give<sup>26</sup> compel the triflers<sup>27</sup> till the ground

- Now mot ich soutere<sup>1</sup> his sone setten to schole,  
 And ich a beggers brol<sup>2</sup> on þe booke lerne,  
 And worþ to<sup>3</sup> a writere, and wiþ a lorde dwell,  
 Oþer falsly to a frere, þe fend for to serven.  
 5 So of þat beggers brol a bychop schal worþen,  
 Among þe peres of þe lond prese<sup>4</sup> to sitten,  
 And lordes sones lowly to þo losells aloute<sup>5</sup>;  
 Knyztes croukeþ<sup>6</sup> hem to, and crucheþ<sup>7</sup> full lowe;  
 And his syre a soutere, ysuled<sup>8</sup> in grees,  
 10 His teep wiþ toyinge of<sup>9</sup> leþer tatered as a sawe!  
 Alaas! þat lordes of þe londe leveþ<sup>10</sup> swiche wrechen,  
 And lenep<sup>11</sup> swiche lorels for her lowe wordes!  
 Þey schulden maken bichopes her owen breþren childre,  
 Oþer of some gentil blod, and<sup>12</sup> so it best semed,  
 15 And foster none faytours,<sup>13</sup> ne swiche false freres,  
 To maken fatt and full, and her fleche combren<sup>14</sup>!  
 For her kynde were more to yclense diches  
 Þan ben to sopers yset first, and served wiþ silver! . . .  
 For Fraunces<sup>15</sup> founded hem nougt to faren<sup>16</sup> on þat wise,  
 20 Ne Domynik<sup>17</sup> dued<sup>18</sup> hem never swiche drynkers to worþe,  
 Ne Helye<sup>19</sup> ne Austen<sup>20</sup> swiche liif never used,  
 But in poverte of spirit spended her tyme.

1 cobbler

2 brat

3 become

4 press forward

5 bow down to the wretches

6 bend down

7 crouch

8 soiled

9 tugging at

10 believe

11 enrich

12 if

13 traitors, deceivers

14 cumber, gorge

15 St. Francis of Assisi, founder  
of the Franciscan order

16 do

17 Dominic, founder of  
the Dominicans

18 endowed

19 Elijah

20 St. Augustine

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

### SONG AGAINST THE FRIARS

The following selection (lines 1-84 of the poem) is reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (London, 1859) 1. 263-5. It is from MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Cleopatra B. 2, which Wright assigns to the year 1382.

Preste, ne monke, ne ȝlt chanoun,  
Ne no man of religioun,  
Gyfen hem so to devocioun  
    As done thes holy frers.  
For summe gyven ham to chyvalry, 5  
Somme to riote and ribaudery;  
Bot ffrers gyven ham to grete study,  
    And to grete prayers.  
Who so kepes thair reule al,  
    Bothe in worde and dede, 10  
I am ful siker that he shal  
    Have heven blis to mede.<sup>1</sup>

Men may se by thair contynauce  
That thai are men of grete penaunce,  
And also that thair sustynauce 15  
    Simple is and wayke.  
I have lyved now fourty ȝers,  
And fatter men about the neres<sup>2</sup>  
Ȝit sawe I never then are these frers,  
    In contreys ther thai rayke.<sup>3</sup> 20

<sup>1</sup> as reward

<sup>2</sup> kidneys; cf. Isa. 34. 6

<sup>3</sup> wander about

Meteles,<sup>1</sup> so megre are thai made,  
 And penaunce so puttes ham down,  
 That ichone is an hors-lade,<sup>2</sup>  
 When he shal trusse of toun.<sup>3</sup>

5 Allas, that ever it shuld be so,  
 Suche clerkes as thai about shuld go,  
 Fro toun to toun by two and two,  
 To seke thair sustynauce !  
 By God that al this world wan,  
 10 He that that ordre first bygan  
 Me thynk certes it was a man  
 Of simple ordynaunce.<sup>4</sup>  
 For thai have noght to lyve by,  
 Thai wandren here and there,  
 15 And dele with dyvers marcerye,<sup>5</sup>  
 Right as thai pedlers were.

Thai dele with purses, pynnes, and knyves,  
 With gyrdles, gloves, for wenches and wyves ;  
 Bot ever backward the husband thryves  
 20 Ther thai are haunted till.<sup>6</sup>  
 For when the gode man is fro hame,  
 And the frere comes to oure dame,  
 He spares nauther for synne ne shame  
 That he ne dos his wille.  
 25 Ȝif thai no helpe of houswyves had,  
 When husbandes are not inne,  
 The freres welfare were ful bad,  
 For thai shuld brewe ful thynne.

Somme frers beren pelure<sup>7</sup> aboute,  
 30 For grete ladys and wenches stoute,

<sup>1</sup> without meat<sup>2</sup> horse load<sup>3</sup> pack out of town<sup>4</sup> regulation, rule of life<sup>5</sup> mercery (textile goods and  
small wares)<sup>6</sup> where they are accustomed  
to go<sup>7</sup> fur

To reverce<sup>1</sup> with thair clothes withoute,  
     Al after that thai ere<sup>2</sup> —  
 For somme vaire,<sup>3</sup> and somme gryse,<sup>4</sup>  
 For somme bugee,<sup>5</sup> and for somme byse<sup>6</sup>;  
 And also many a dyvers spyse, 5  
     In bagges about thai bere.  
 Al that for women is plesand  
     Ful redy certes have thai;  
 Bot lytel gyfe thai the husband,  
     That for al shal pay. 10

Trantes<sup>7</sup> thai can,<sup>8</sup> and many a jape<sup>9</sup>;  
 For somme can with a pound of sape<sup>10</sup>  
 Gete him a kyrtelle<sup>11</sup> and a cape,  
     And somewhat els therto.  
 Wherto shuld I othes swere? 15  
 Ther is no pedler that pak can bere  
 That half so dere can selle his gere  
     As<sup>12</sup> a frer can do.  
 For if he gife a wyfe a knyfe  
     That cost bot penys two, 20  
 Worthe ten knyves, so mot I thryfe,  
     He wyl have er he go.

Iche man that here shal lede his life,  
 That has a faire doghter or a wyfe,  
 Be war that no frer ham shryfe, 25  
     Nauther loude ne stille.  
 Thof women seme of hert ful stable,  
 With faire byhest and with fable  
 Thai can make thair hertes chaungeable,  
     And thair likynges fulfille. 30

<sup>1</sup> to turn back, so as to show  
the lining

<sup>2</sup> plow (?)

<sup>3</sup> fur made from the skin of a  
kind of squirrel

<sup>4</sup> gray fur

<sup>5</sup> lambskin fur

<sup>6</sup> a (brown?) fur used for trimming

<sup>7</sup> tricks

<sup>8</sup> know

<sup>9</sup> jest

<sup>10</sup> soap

<sup>11</sup> mantle

<sup>12</sup> MS. then

Be war<sup>1</sup> ay with the lymytour,<sup>2</sup>  
 And with his felawe bathe,  
 And<sup>3</sup> thai make maystries<sup>4</sup> in thi bour,  
 It shal turne the to scathe.<sup>5</sup>

## ON THE MINORITE FRIARS

This poem, found in the same manuscript as the preceding one, is also reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (i. 268-70). The writer seems to be describing pictorial representations.

5 Of thes frer mynours me thenkes moch wonder,  
 That waxen are thus hauteyn,<sup>6</sup> that som tyme weren under;  
 Among men of holy chirch thai maken mochel blonder<sup>7</sup>;  
 Nou he that sytes<sup>8</sup> us above make ham sone to sonder<sup>9</sup>!  
 With an O and an I, thai praysen not Seynt Poule;  
 10 Thai lyen on Seyn[t] Fraunceys, by my fader soule.

First thai gabben on<sup>10</sup> God, that alle men may se,  
 When thai hangen him on hegh on a grene tre,  
 With leves and with blossomies that bright are of ble,<sup>11</sup>  
 That was never Goddes Son, by my leute.<sup>12</sup>  
 15 With an O and an I, men wenen that thai wede,<sup>13</sup>  
 To carpe so of clergy that<sup>14</sup> can not thair Crede.

Thai have done him on a croys fer up in the skye,  
 And festned on hym wyenges, as he shuld flie;  
 This fals feyned byleve<sup>15</sup> shal thai soure bye,<sup>16</sup>  
 20 On that lovelych Lord so for to lye.  
 With an O and an I, one sayd ful stille:  
 'Armachan<sup>17</sup> distroy ham, if it is Goddes wille!'

<sup>1</sup> cautious<sup>2</sup> friar licensed to beg within certain limits; cf. Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Tale* 9-25<sup>3</sup> if<sup>4</sup> play tricks<sup>5</sup> to your harm<sup>6</sup> haughty<sup>7</sup> confusion<sup>8</sup> sits<sup>9</sup> disperse them soon<sup>10</sup> make sport of<sup>11</sup> hue<sup>12</sup> loyalty, faith<sup>13</sup> go mad<sup>14</sup> MS. thai<sup>15</sup> belief<sup>16</sup> Cf. 112 23<sup>17</sup> Richard Fitzralph  
(d. 1360)

Ther comes one out of the skye in a grey gown,  
 As it were an hoghyerd<sup>1</sup> hyand<sup>2</sup> to toun;  
 Thai have mo<sup>3</sup> goddes then we, I say by Mahoun,<sup>4</sup>  
 Alle men under ham that ever beres croun.<sup>5</sup>

With an O and an I, why shuld thai not be shent<sup>6</sup>? 5  
 Ther wantes noght bot a fyre that thai nere alle brent.<sup>7</sup>

Went I forther on my way in that same tyde<sup>8</sup>;  
 Ther I sawe a frere blede in myddes of his syde;  
 Bothe in hondes and in fete had he woundes wyde.  
 To serve to that same frer the pope mot abyde.<sup>9</sup> 10  
 With an O and an I, I wonder of thes dedes,  
 To se a pope holde a dische whyl the frer bledes.

A cart was made al of fyre, as it shuld be;  
 A gray frer I sawe therinne, that best lyked me.  
 Wele I wote thai shal be brent, by my leaute; 15  
 God graunt me that grace that I may it se.  
 With an O and an I, brent be thai alle,  
 And alle that helpes therto faire mot byfalle<sup>10</sup>!

Thai preche alle of povert, bot that love thai noght;  
 For gode mete to thair mouthe the toun is thurgh soght.<sup>11</sup> 20  
 Wyde are thair wonnynges,<sup>12</sup> and wonderfully wrought;  
 Murdre and horedome<sup>13</sup> ful dere has it boght.  
 With an O and an I, for sixe pens er thai fayle,  
 Sle thi fadre, and jape<sup>14</sup> thi modre, and thai wyl the assoile.

<sup>1</sup> swineherd  
<sup>2</sup> hastening  
<sup>3</sup> more  
<sup>4</sup> Mahomet  
<sup>5</sup> tonsure

<sup>6</sup> destroyed  
<sup>7</sup> burned  
<sup>8</sup> time  
<sup>9</sup> must wait  
<sup>10</sup> may fair (good) befall

<sup>11</sup> searched through  
<sup>12</sup> dwellings  
<sup>13</sup> whoredom  
<sup>14</sup> lie with

## THE REPLY OF FRIAR DAW TOPIAS

About 1401. This selection, from MS. Oxford Digby 41, is here reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2. 76-8.

Forthermore <sup>1</sup> thou spekest  
 Of oure costli houses;  
 Thou seist it were more almes  
 To helpen the nedy  
 5 Than to make siche housynge  
 To men that ben deede,  
 To whiche longith <sup>2</sup> but graves  
 And mornynge-housis.  
 Jak, is not a man beter  
 10 Than a rude best?  
 ¶ It makist thou to thi sheep a shepen,<sup>8</sup>  
 And to thi hors a stable;  
 And many a pore man ther is  
 That hath noon hillyng,<sup>4</sup>  
 15 But oonly heven is his hous.  
 The bestes stond kevered;  
 Whi houses thou not pore men  
 As wele as thi beestis?  
 Take hede to sumwhat  
 20 That is seid biforen:  
 And <sup>5</sup> thou answer to my question,  
 Answer to thin owne.  
 Thou carpest <sup>6</sup> also of oure coveitise,  
 And sparist the sothe;  
 25 Thou seist we ben more ryal<sup>7</sup>  
 Than ony lordis.  
 Coventis have wee noon, Jack,  
 But cloistrers we ben callid,  
 Foundid <sup>1</sup> afor<sup>8</sup> with charite,

<sup>1</sup> MS. ff-

<sup>2</sup> belong, are fitting

<sup>3</sup> sheep-cote

<sup>4</sup> shelter

<sup>5</sup> if

<sup>6</sup> talkest

<sup>7</sup> royal, regal

<sup>8</sup> aforetime



Or that he were flemyd<sup>1</sup>;  
 But sith<sup>2</sup> entride envie,  
 And revyd<sup>3</sup> hath oure houses,  
 That unnethes<sup>4</sup> the hillinge<sup>5</sup>  
 Hangith on the sparres<sup>6</sup>; 5  
 And git thou thinkist hem over-good —  
 Yvel fare thou therfore !  
 Jak, where saw thou ever frere-houses  
 Thourgout the rewme<sup>7</sup>  
 Liche in ony rialte<sup>8</sup> 10  
 To the Toure of Londoun,  
 To Wyndesore, to Wodestoke,  
 To Wallingforde, to Shene,  
 To Herforde, to Eltham,  
 To Westmynster, to Dover<sup>9</sup>? 15  
 How maist thou for rebukyng  
 Lye so lowde,  
 To saye that oure covetise  
 Passith the lordes'?

## THE LAND OF COKAYGNE

*The Land of Cokaygne*, which has been called the earliest extant English fabliau, is not a fabliau at all, but rather a piece of Rabelaisian satire. With the satire, which is directed against monks and nuns, and possibly includes some local and specific references, are, however, mingled touches of the purely comic spirit. Cf. Pherecrates, in Athenæus 6. 97.

An Old French poem similar in character is found in Barbazan and Méon's *Fabliaux et Contes* 4. 175–81, entitled *Li Fabliaus de Coquaigne* (though, again, not a fabliau). Here the details are somewhat different, and the satiric intent, and reference to the religious orders, much less marked, but the general picture is of the same sort. One of the most amusing details is similar:

Par les rues vont rostissant  
 Les crasses oes, et tornant  
 Tout par eles [lines 37–9].

<sup>1</sup> before it was banished

<sup>2</sup> afterward

<sup>3</sup> robbed; MS. renyd

<sup>4</sup> so that scarcely

<sup>5</sup> roof

<sup>6</sup> rafters, beams

<sup>7</sup> realm

<sup>8</sup> royalty

<sup>9</sup> Royal castles or palaces were  
in all these places

Here there are two rivers of wine, of which he who will may drink ; four Easters, Christmases, and All-Saints Days every year ; but a Lent only once in twenty years !

Our text is reproduced (120 lines out of 190) from Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1. 148 ff.), which follows MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 913. It has been dated ca. 1305.

- Fur<sup>1</sup> in see bi west Spaygne<sup>2</sup>  
 Is a lond ihote<sup>3</sup> Cokaygne.  
 Þer nis lond under hevenriche<sup>4</sup>  
 Of wel,<sup>5</sup> of godnis, hit iliche ;  
 5 Þoȝ Paradis be miri and briȝt,  
 Cokaygn is of fairir siȝt.  
 What is þer in Paradis  
 Bot grasse, and flure, and grene ris<sup>6</sup> ?  
 Þoȝ þer be joi and grete dute,<sup>7</sup>  
 10 Þer nis mete<sup>8</sup> bote frute ;  
 Þer nis halle, bure,<sup>9</sup> no benche,  
 Bot watir, manis þurst to quenche.  
 Beþ þer no man but two —  
 Hely<sup>10</sup> and Enok<sup>11</sup> also ;  
 15 Elinglich<sup>12</sup> may hi go  
 Whar þer woniþ<sup>13</sup> men no mo.  
 In Cokaygne is met and drink  
 Wiþute care, how,<sup>14</sup> and swink.<sup>15</sup>  
 Þe met is trie,<sup>16</sup> þe drink is clere,  
 20 To none, russin,<sup>17</sup> and sopper.  
 I sigge<sup>18</sup> forsoþ, boutē were,<sup>19</sup>  
 Þer nis lond on erthe is pere<sup>20</sup> ;  
 Under heven nis lond, iwisse,<sup>21</sup>  
 Of so mochil joi and blisse.  
 25 Þer is mani swete siȝte :  
 Al is dai, nis þer no niȝte ;

1 far

2 MS. Spayngne

3 called

4 heaven's domain

5 prosperity

6 branches

7 delight

8 is no food

9 chamber

10 Elijah ; cf. 2 Kings 2. 11

11 Enoch ; cf. Gen. 5. 24

12 sorrowfully

13 dwell

14 trouble

15 labor

16 select

17 (?)

18 say

19 without doubt

20 its equal

21 indeed

Þer nis baret <sup>1</sup> noþer strif ;  
 Nis þer no deþ, ac <sup>2</sup> ever lif ;  
 Þer nis lac of met no cloþ ;  
 Þer nis man no womman wroþ ;  
 Þer nis serpent, wolf, no fox, 5  
 Hors no capil, <sup>3</sup> kowe no ox ;  
 Þer nis schepe, no swine, no gote,  
 Ne non horwǵ, <sup>4</sup> la, <sup>5</sup> God it wot,  
 Nother harace, <sup>6</sup> nother stode <sup>7</sup> ;  
 Þe londe is ful of oþer gode. 10  
 Nis þer flei, <sup>8</sup> fle, <sup>9</sup> no lowse,  
 In cloþ, in toune, bed, no house ;  
 Þer nis dunnir, <sup>10</sup> slete, no haile, <sup>11</sup>  
 No non vile worme, no snaile, <sup>12</sup>  
 No non storme, rein, no winde ; 15  
 Þer is man no womman blinde ;  
 Ok <sup>13</sup> al is game, <sup>14</sup> joi, and gle.  
 Wel is him þat þer mai be !  
 Þer beþ rivers gret and fine,  
 Of oile, melk, honi, and wine ; 20  
 Watir servip þer to noþing  
 Bot to sigt and to waiissing. <sup>15</sup>  
 Þer is [mani] <sup>16</sup> maner frute ;  
 Al is solas and dedute. <sup>17</sup>  
 Þer is a wel fair abbei 25  
 Of white monkes and of grei :  
 Þer beþ bowris and halles ;  
 Al of pasteis <sup>18</sup> beþ þe walles,  
 Of fleis, of fisse, and rich met,  
 Þe likfullist <sup>19</sup> þat man mai et, 30  
 Fluren <sup>20</sup> cakes beþ þe scingles <sup>21</sup> alle

<sup>1</sup> quarrel<sup>2</sup> but<sup>3</sup> nag<sup>4</sup> defilement<sup>5</sup> truly<sup>6</sup> place for breeding horses<sup>7</sup> stud<sup>8</sup> fly<sup>9</sup> flea<sup>10</sup> thunder<sup>11</sup> hail ; MS. hawle<sup>12</sup> MS. snawile<sup>13</sup> but<sup>14</sup> mirth<sup>15</sup> washing<sup>16</sup> em. M.<sup>17</sup> delight<sup>18</sup> pasties, pies<sup>19</sup> most delicious<sup>20</sup> flour<sup>21</sup> shingles

*Carroll*

*Francis*

Of cherche, cloister, boure, and halle;  
 þe pinnes<sup>1</sup> beþ fat podinges —  
 Rich met to princez and [to] kinges;  
 Man mai þerof et inoȝ  
 5 Al wiþ riȝt, and noȝt wiþ woȝ<sup>2</sup>:  
 Al is commune to ȝung and old,  
 To stoute and sterne, mek and bold.  
 þer is a cloister, fair and liȝt,  
 Brod and lang, of sembli<sup>3</sup> siȝt.  
 10 þe pilers of þat cloistre alle  
 Beþ iturned of cristale,  
 With har bas<sup>4</sup> and capitale  
 Of grene jasje and rede corale.  
 In þe praer<sup>5</sup> is a tre,  
 15 Swiþe likful<sup>6</sup> for to se:  
 þe rote is ȝingevir and ȝalingale<sup>7</sup>;  
 þe siouns<sup>8</sup> beþ al sedwale<sup>9</sup>;  
 Trie maces beþ þe flure;  
 þe rind, canel<sup>10</sup> of swet odor;  
 20 þe frute, ȝilofre<sup>11</sup> of gode smakke<sup>12</sup>;  
 Of cucubes<sup>13</sup> þer nis no lakke.  
 þer beþ rosis of rede ble,<sup>14</sup>  
 And lilie likful for to se —  
 þai faloweþ<sup>15</sup> never day no niȝt;  
 25 þis aȝt be<sup>16</sup> a swete siȝt.  
 þer beþ iiij willis<sup>17</sup> in þe abbei  
 Of triacle<sup>18</sup> and halwei,<sup>19</sup>  
 Of baum<sup>20</sup> and ek piement,<sup>21</sup>  
 Ever ernend<sup>22</sup> to riȝt rent<sup>23</sup>;  
 30 Of þam<sup>24</sup> stremis al þe molde.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup> pinnacles<sup>2</sup> wrong<sup>3</sup> seemly<sup>4</sup> their base<sup>5</sup> meadow<sup>6</sup> very attractive<sup>7</sup> ginger and ȝalingale (sweet  
cyperus)<sup>8</sup> scions, shoots<sup>9</sup> zedoary<sup>10</sup> cinnamon<sup>11</sup> gillyflower<sup>12</sup> taste<sup>13</sup> cubebs (a pungent spice)<sup>14</sup> hue<sup>15</sup> fade<sup>16</sup> ought to be<sup>17</sup> wells<sup>18</sup> treacle (a medicine)<sup>19</sup> healing water<sup>20</sup> balm<sup>21</sup> spiced wine sweetened  
with honey<sup>22</sup> running<sup>23</sup> profit<sup>24</sup> these; MS. þai<sup>25</sup> earth, nom.

Stonis preciuse, and golde :  
 þer is saphir and uniune,<sup>1</sup>  
 Carbuncle and astiune,<sup>2</sup>  
 Smaragde,<sup>3</sup> lugre,<sup>4</sup> and prassiune,<sup>6</sup>  
 Beril, onix, topasiune,<sup>6</sup> 5  
 Ametist and crisolite,  
 Calcedun and epetite.<sup>7</sup>  
 þer beþ briddes mani and fale<sup>8</sup> —  
 þrostit, pruisse,<sup>9</sup> and nigtingale,  
 Chalandre<sup>10</sup> and wodwale,<sup>11</sup> 10  
 And oþer briddes wipout tale,<sup>12</sup>  
 þat stintep<sup>13</sup> never by har miȝt<sup>14</sup>  
 Miri to sing dai and niȝt.  
 Ȝite I do ȝow mo to witte<sup>15</sup> :  
 þe gees irostid on þe spitte 15  
 Fleez<sup>16</sup> to þat abbai, God hit wot,  
 And grediþ<sup>17</sup> : ' Gees al hote, al hot ! '  
 Hi bringeþ garlek gret plente,  
 þe best idiȝt<sup>18</sup> þat man mai se.  
 þe leverokes<sup>19</sup> — þat beþ cuþ<sup>20</sup> — 20  
 Ligtip adun to manis muþ,  
 Idiȝt in stu<sup>21</sup> ful swiþe wel,  
 Pudrid<sup>22</sup> wiþ gilofre and canel.  
 Nis no spech of no drink ;  
 Ak take inoȝ wiþute swink. 25  
 Whan þe monkes goop<sup>23</sup> to masse,  
 All þe fenestres<sup>24</sup> þat beþ of glasse  
 Turneþ into cristal briȝt,  
 To ȝive [þe] monkes more ligt.  
 When þe masses beþ iseiid, 30

<sup>1</sup> pearl<sup>2</sup> astrion (*perhaps* asteriated sapphire)<sup>3</sup> emerald<sup>4</sup> ligure<sup>6</sup> chrysoprase<sup>6</sup> topaz<sup>7</sup> hepatite<sup>3</sup> numerous<sup>9</sup> thrush<sup>10</sup> a Mediterranean species of lark ; see *Romance of the Rose* (81, 663), 914<sup>11</sup> woodpecker<sup>12</sup> number<sup>13</sup> cease<sup>14</sup> according to their ability<sup>15</sup> give you to know further<sup>16</sup> fly ; MS. fleeg<sup>17</sup> cry out<sup>18</sup> dressed<sup>19</sup> larks<sup>20</sup> well known<sup>21</sup> made into a stew<sup>22</sup> sprinkled<sup>23</sup> MS. geeþ<sup>24</sup> windows

And þe bokes up ileiid,<sup>1</sup>  
 Þe cristal turniþ into glasse —  
 In state þat hit raper<sup>2</sup> wasse.

## THE GOSSIPS' FEAST

The following poem is reprinted from Dyboski's *Songs, Carols, etc.* (E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. 101), an edition of Richard Hill's *Commonplace-Book* (MS. Oxford Balliol 354). The manuscript contains records as late as 1536, but our text differs only slightly from that of Wright in *Percy Society* 23. 91-5, which is dated by the editor 1461-85, and from which two or three readings are here adopted (marked W.). Our text is on pages 106-8 of Dyboski.

5        *Hoow, gossip myne, gossip myn,*  
       *Whan will we go to þe wyne,*  
       *Good gossip[is myn] ?*  
  
       I shall you tell a full good sport,  
       How gossippis gader them on a sort,<sup>3</sup>  
       Ther seke<sup>4</sup> bodyes to comfote,  
 10        Whan they mete  
       In lane or stret,  
       God<sup>5</sup> gossipis myn, [a !]  
  
       But I dare not, for per dissplemans,<sup>6</sup>  
       Tell of þes maters half the substance ;  
 15        But ȝet sumwhat of þer governance,<sup>7</sup>  
       As ferre as I dare,  
       I will declare,  
       Good gossipis myn, [a !]  
  
       ' Good gossip myn, wher have ye be ?  
 20        Hit is so long sith I you see ;  
       Wher is þe best wyne, tell you me !  
       Can ye owght tell ? '  
       ' Ye, full well,  
       Good gossippis myn, [a !]

<sup>1</sup> laid<sup>2</sup> formerly<sup>3</sup> in a company<sup>4</sup> sick<sup>5</sup> good<sup>6</sup> lest I displease them<sup>7</sup> proceedings

I know a drawght of mery-go-down,<sup>1</sup>

The beste it is in all this town,

But yet I wolde not, for my gown,

My husbond wyste.'

'Ye may me triste,<sup>2</sup>

5

Good gossippis myn, [a!']

'Call forth owr gossippis by and by,

Elynore, Johan, and Margery,

Margret, Alis, and Cecely,

For þei will cum,

10

Both all and som,

Good gossippis myn, a!

And eche of them will sumwhat bryng,

Gose, or pigge, or capons wyng,

Pastes<sup>3</sup> of pygynnes, or sum oþer thyng;

15

For we muste ete

Sum maner mett,

Good gossippis myn, a!

Go beffore by tweyn and tweyn,

Wisely, þat ye be not seen,

20

For I muste home and cum agayn,

To witt, ywis,

Wher my husbond is,

Good gossippis myn, a!

A strype or two God myght send me,

25

Yf my husbond myght here see me.'

'She þat is aferde, lett her flee,'

Quod Alis than;

'I dred no man,

Good gossippis myn, a!'

30

<sup>1</sup> strong ale

<sup>2</sup> trust

<sup>3</sup> pasties, pies

' Now be we in þe tavern sett,  
 A drawght of þe best lett hym fett,  
 To bryng owr husbondis owt of dett,  
 For we will spend  
 5 Till God more send,  
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

Eche of them browght forth þer disshe ;  
 Sum browght flesshe, and sum [browght] fissue  
 Quod Margret meke now, with a wisshe :  
 10 ' I wold Anne were here,  
 She wold mak us chere,  
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

' How say ye, gossippis ? Is þis wyn good ? '  
 ' Þat is it,' quod Elynore, ' by þe rode !  
 15 It chereth þe hart and comforteth þe blod.  
 Such jonkets <sup>1</sup> amonge  
 Shall make us leve <sup>2</sup> long.  
 Good gossippis [myn, a] ! '

Anne bade me fill a pot of Muscadell,  
 20 ' For of all wynes I love it well ;  
 Swet wynes kepe my body in hele <sup>3</sup> ;  
 Yf I had it nowght,  
 I shuld tak thought,  
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

' How loke ye, gossip, at þe bordis end ?  
 25 Not mery, gossip ? God it amend !  
 All shall be well, els God defend ;  
 Be mery and glad,  
 And sit not so sade,  
 30 Good gossip myn, a ! '

<sup>1</sup> delicacies (drinks) ; MS. jonkers ; W. jonchettes

<sup>2</sup> live

<sup>3</sup> health, well-being



'Wold God I had don after your counsell,  
 For my husbond is so fell<sup>1</sup>  
 He betith me lyke þe devill of hell;  
 And þe more I crye,  
 Þe lesse mercy,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

5

Alis with a lowde voys spak than :  
 'Ywis,<sup>2</sup>' she said, 'litill good he can,  
 Þat betith or striketh any woman,  
 And specially his wyff;  
 God geve hym short lyff,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

10.

Margret meke said : 'So mot I thryve,  
 I know no man þat is alyve  
 Þat gevith me ii strokis, but he [shall]<sup>3</sup> have v;  
 I am not afferd,  
 Thowgh he have a berde,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

15.

On<sup>4</sup> cast down her shot,<sup>5</sup> and went away.  
 'Gossip,' quod Elynore, 'what dide she pay?'  
 'Not but a peny; loo, þerfor I say,  
 She shall no more  
 Be of owr lore,<sup>6</sup>  
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

20

Suche gestis<sup>7</sup> we may have ynow,  
 Þat will not for þer shot alowe.<sup>8</sup>  
 With whom com she, gossip?' 'With you !'  
 'Nay,' quod Johan,  
 'I com aloon,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

25

30

<sup>1</sup> cruel  
<sup>2</sup> W ; MS. evis  
<sup>3</sup> W.

<sup>4</sup> one  
<sup>5</sup> contribution, share  
<sup>6</sup> school, sort

<sup>7</sup> guests  
<sup>8</sup> provide

'Now rekyn ovr shot, and go we hens;  
 What cummeth to eche of us?' 'But iii pens.<sup>1</sup>'

'Parde, þis is but a small expens

For suche a sorte,  
 5 And all but sporte,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

'Torn down þe stret, whan ye cum owt,  
 And we will cumpas rownd about.'

'Gossip,' quod Anne, 'what nedith þat dowt?'<sup>2</sup>  
 10 Your husbond is pleased,  
 Whan ye be eased,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !

Whatsoever any man thynk,  
 We com for nowght but for good drynk;  
 15 Now let us go home and wynke,  
 For it may be seen  
 Wher we have ben,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

This is þe thowght þat gossippis take :  
 20 Ons in þe wek, mery will they make,  
 And all small drynkis þei will forsake ;  
 But wyne of þe best  
 Shall have no rest,  
 Good gossippis myn, a !

Sum be at þe tavern þrise<sup>3</sup> in þe weke,  
 25 And so be sum every day eke,  
 Or ellis þei will gron and mak them sek,  
 For thyngis used  
 Will not be refused<sup>4</sup> ;  
 30 Good gossippis myn, a !

<sup>1</sup> MS. d.  
<sup>2</sup> fear

<sup>3</sup> MS. III\*

<sup>4</sup> for things one is accustomed  
 to cannot be done without

## STANS PUER AD MENSAM

The following poem, by John Lydgate (1370?-1451?), the follower and imitator of Chaucer, is taken from the print of MS. Harl. 2251 (about 1460) in *The Babees Book*, ed. Furnivall (E.E.T.S. 32). With its precepts one may compare Chaucer's characterization of the Prioress (*Prol.* 127-36):

At mete wel ytaught was she withalle;  
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.  
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,  
 That no drope ne fille upon hir brest.  
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.  
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene  
 That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene  
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.  
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.

Our extract comprises lines 15-42, 57-70. Two or three emendations are from the Lambeth MS.

Who spekithe to the in any maner place,  
 Rudely cast nat thyn ye<sup>1</sup> adowne,  
 But with a sadde chiere<sup>2</sup> loke hym in the face.  
 Walke demurely by strete in the towne;  
 Advertise the withe<sup>3</sup> wisdom and reasoun. 5  
 Withe dissolute laughers do thow non offence  
 Tofore<sup>4</sup> thy soverayn,<sup>5</sup> whiles he is in presence.  
  
 Pare clene thy nailes, thyn handes wasshe also  
 Tofore mete, and whan thow dooest arise;  
 Sitte in that place thow art assigned to; 10  
 Prease<sup>6</sup> nat to<sup>7</sup> hye in no maner wise;  
 And til thow se afore the thy service,<sup>8</sup>  
 Be nat to hasty on brede for to byte,  
 Of gredynesse lest men wolde the edwyte.<sup>9</sup>  
  
 Grennyng and mowes<sup>10</sup> at the table eschewe<sup>11</sup>; 15  
 Cry nat to loude; kepe honestly<sup>12</sup> silence;

<sup>1</sup> eye<sup>2</sup> sober expression<sup>3</sup> turn your attention to<sup>4</sup> before<sup>5</sup> master<sup>6</sup> press<sup>7</sup> too<sup>8</sup> plate of food<sup>9</sup> reproach, twit; MS. end-<sup>10</sup> grinning and grimaces<sup>11</sup> MS. eschowe<sup>12</sup> politely

To enboce<sup>1</sup> thy jowis<sup>2</sup> withe mete [it] is nat diewe<sup>8</sup> .  
 With ful mowthe speke nat, lest thou do offence ;  
 Drynk nat bretheles for hast ne negligence ;  
 Kepe clene thy lippes from fat of flesshe or fysshe ;  
 5 Wype clene thi spone, leve it nat in thy disshe.

Of brede ibyten no soppis<sup>4</sup> that thou make ;  
 In ale nor wyne withe hande leve no fattenes ;  
 With mowthe enbrewed<sup>6</sup> thi cuppe thou nat take ;  
 Defoule<sup>9</sup> no napery<sup>7</sup> for no rekelesnes ;  
 10 [Loude]<sup>8</sup> for to soupe is agenst gentiles.  
 [N]evyr at mete begynne thou nat stryf<sup>9</sup> ;  
 Thi teth also thou pike nat with no knyf. . . .

Droppe nat thi brest withe sawce ne with potage ;  
 Brynge no knyves unskoured to the table ;  
 15 Fil nat thy spone, lest in the cariage  
 It went beside,<sup>10</sup> whiche were nat comendable.  
 Be quyke and redy, meke and servisable,  
 Wele awaityng to fulfyll anone  
 What that thy soverayne comau[n]dithe to<sup>11</sup> be done.

20 And wharesoever that thou dyne or soue,  
 Of gentillesse take salt withe thy knyf ;  
 And be wele ware thou blowe nat in the cuppe.  
 Reverence thy felawe, gynne<sup>12</sup> withe hym no stryf ;  
 Be<sup>18</sup> thy powere, kepe pees all thy lyf.  
 25 Interrupt nat, whereso [that]<sup>14</sup> thou wende,  
 None other mans tale, til he have made an ende.

<sup>1</sup> stuff out  
<sup>2</sup> jaws  
<sup>3</sup> fitting  
<sup>4</sup> sops  
<sup>5</sup> soiled

<sup>6</sup> defile ; MS. enbrewe (em.  
 from Lambeth MS.)  
<sup>7</sup> table-linen  
<sup>8</sup> em. from Lamb.  
<sup>9</sup> MS. stryfe

<sup>10</sup> should spill over  
<sup>11</sup> MS. the to (em. from Lamb.)  
<sup>12</sup> begin  
<sup>18</sup> according to  
<sup>14</sup> em. from Lamb.

CHARM FOR THE TOOTHACHE

From MS. Linc. Cath. Thornton A. 1. 17, printed in Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 1. 375.

*Say þe charme thris to<sup>1</sup> it be sayd ix tymes, and ay  
thris at a charemynge.<sup>2</sup>*

I conjoure the, laythely<sup>3</sup> beste, with<sup>4</sup> þat ilke spere  
þat Longyous<sup>5</sup> in his hande gane bere,  
And also with ane hatte of thorne 5  
þat one my Lordis hede was borne,  
With alle þe wordis, mare and lesse,  
With þe office of þe messe,  
With my Lorde and his xii postills,<sup>6</sup>  
With oure Lady and hir x maydenys, 10  
Saynt Margrete, þe haly quene,  
Saynt Katerin, þe haly virgyne —  
Ix tymes Goddis forbott,<sup>7</sup> þou wikkyde worme,  
þat ever þou make any rystynge,<sup>8</sup>  
Bot awaye mote þou wende 15  
To þe erde<sup>9</sup> and þe stane.<sup>10</sup>

PREFACE TO A TREATISE ON MEDICINE

From the Payne manuscript, of the first half of the fifteenth century, printed in Furnivall's *Political, Religious, and Love Poems* (E.E.T.S. 15). Readings supplied from Sloane MS. 1314 are marked S.

The man þat wol of lechecraft<sup>11</sup> lere,  
Red ovyr this book, and he may here  
Many medycinis both good and trewe,  
To hele sores both oolde and newe, 20  
And precieuse medycinis, þorw Goddis grace

<sup>1</sup> till

<sup>2</sup> charming

<sup>3</sup> loathsome

<sup>4</sup> by

<sup>5</sup> Longus, or Longinus, the Roman soldier  
who pierced the side of Christ

<sup>6</sup> apostles

<sup>7</sup> God forbid

<sup>8</sup> delay (resting)

<sup>9</sup> earth

<sup>10</sup> stone

<sup>11</sup> medicine

To save mens <sup>1</sup> lyves in diverse place.  
 Cryst, þat made bothe Est and West,  
 Geve grace her sowles have <sup>2</sup> god rest,  
 Evere more in hevene for to be,  
 5 In hevene wyt þe Trinite!  
 Herinne be medycinis, wythoutyn fable,  
 To hele alle sores þat ben curable,  
 Of swerd, of knyf, and of arwe <sup>3</sup> —  
 Be þe wounde wyde or narwe —  
 10 Of sper, <sup>4</sup> of quarel, <sup>5</sup> of dagger, of dart,  
 To make him hool in ilka <sup>6</sup> part,  
 So þe seek <sup>7</sup> wol do wysely,  
 And kepe himself fro surfety.  
 Be þe wounde nevere so deep,  
 15 Þerof thar <sup>8</sup> him take no kep,  
 So þat he drynke save <sup>9</sup> or anteoche, <sup>10</sup>  
 Him thar <sup>8</sup> not drede of þat outrage:  
 Be <sup>11</sup> þat on and twenti days be goon,  
 He schal be hol, both flesch and bon,  
 20 To ride and go in ilka <sup>12</sup> place,  
 Thorw þe verteu of Goddys grace.  
 Thus seyth Ypocras, <sup>13</sup> þe good surgien,  
 And Socrates and Galyen, <sup>14</sup>  
 Þat weren philisophres alle thre,  
 25 Þat tyme þe best in any countree:  
 In þis werld <sup>15</sup> were non her <sup>16</sup> pere,  
 As fer as any man coude here.

<sup>1</sup> MS. men<sup>2</sup> may have<sup>3</sup> arrow<sup>4</sup> spear<sup>5</sup> a short, square-headed arrow<sup>6</sup> every; MS. ylke, S. ilka<sup>7</sup> if the sick man<sup>8</sup> he need; MS. dar, S. thar<sup>9</sup> sage<sup>10</sup> a medicinal potion of herbs  
boiled in white wine and  
honey<sup>11</sup> by the time<sup>12</sup> MS. ylka, S. ilka<sup>13</sup> Hippocrates<sup>14</sup> Galen<sup>15</sup> MS. weld<sup>16</sup> their

## A MEDIÆVAL WILL

This will (from MS. Oxford Univ. Coll. 97), which the testator dates in the year 1399, is here reprinted from Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 2. 448-9.

In þe name of Almyghty Jesu, I, Robart F[olkyngham], beynge in hool and cleere mynde, þe vi day of Juylle,<sup>1</sup> þe zeere of our Lorde a thousand þre hundreth foure score and nynetene, make my testament and my laste wylle in þis manere. First, I bytake<sup>2</sup> my soule into þe hondes of Almyghty God, bysechyng to oure lady, Seynte Marye, and to alle þe hoole compaygnye of heven, to preye for mercy and grace for me. Also I byqwethe my wrecchyd synfulle body to been heere in erthe, abydyng þe dredful doom of God, in suche place and manere as yt lyketh to his wyse endeles purveaunce.<sup>3</sup> Also I wylle þat at myn enterement þere be abowte my body bot twey<sup>4</sup> tapres of wex, and foure torches of wex, þe whiche torches I wille be zeven to brenne atte þe levacioun<sup>5</sup> of þe sacrement whil þei wil dure,<sup>6</sup> in þe same chirche þat I schalle be beryed inne. Also I wille þat, in alle þe haste þat yt may be doo after my deth, þere be sayde a thousande massez for my soule, and for alle Cristen soules. Also I bequethe, to be doon in almesse after<sup>7</sup> dyscrecioun of myn executours, in alle þe hast for my soule, for þe soules of my fadre, modre, and of alle hem þat I am endebtede to by way of kynde,<sup>8</sup> by way of ffrendshipe, or by way of restitucioun, for þe gode I have hade of heres<sup>9</sup> by any way, fourty pounde of golde, and, over þat, þat þei have part of alle þe preysours, goode dedes, and almesse þat I have do or ordeyned to be doo, as wel in þis testament as tofore<sup>10</sup> in alle my lyf. Sythene,<sup>11</sup> I zeve to William Flete, my cosyn, fourty marke of golde and alle myn horses, a blew bed of Arras werke, twey payre schetes, my best haberjoun,<sup>12</sup> my pysan,<sup>13</sup> my ketylle-hat,<sup>14</sup> and myn armyngge sworde of Burdeux. Also I bequeth to Johan of Brugge an haberjoun, a basynet,<sup>15</sup> a longe dagger of Burdeux harneyside<sup>16</sup> with sylver in manere of a sword.

<sup>1</sup> July<sup>2</sup> commit<sup>3</sup> providence<sup>4</sup> two<sup>5</sup> lifting up<sup>6</sup> last<sup>7</sup> at the<sup>8</sup> kindred<sup>9</sup> theirs, them<sup>10</sup> before<sup>11</sup> next<sup>12</sup> habergeon, coat of mail<sup>13</sup> pisane (armor to protect chest and neck)<sup>14</sup> kind of helmet<sup>15</sup> basinet (steel headpiece)<sup>16</sup> mounted

Also, I geve to Thomas Salman an haberjoun and a basynet.

Also, I byqueth to William Flete, my cosyn, alle þe remanant of myne armeure.

Also, I byqweth to Sir William Countour a longe sangwyn<sup>1</sup> gowne  
5 furred with Calabir.<sup>2</sup>

Also, I byqueth to Thomas Heighelme a gowne of blak worstede, furred with bevere.

Also, I wylle þat alle þe debtez þat any man cane resonably axe, þat þei been payed. And þe remanant of alle my goode, whereso  
10 it be in þe handes of my debtours or elles,<sup>3</sup> I beqweth it to Jonet, my wyfe, to governe and susteyne with, hir and Elianore my doughtre, ande eke to doon in almesse for me, and for here, and for alle hem þat we been endebted to doon for by any way, as sche may resonably, nougt amenysynge<sup>4</sup> gretely here lyfode ne here povre  
15 stat. The execucioun of whiche thynges abovesayd after my laste wille to be doon and fulfillide, I make myn executours Jonet my wyfe, William Wenloke, Squiere, Sire William Countour, Preste, Thomas Heighelme, Thomas Salman, William Flete, my cosyn; preyinge to hem for Goddes sake, for charitable dede of almesse,  
20 and for þe sovereyn trust I have in hem, þat þei wille take pis charge on hem, and refuse it by no maner way. Writen þe day and ȝere tofore nempned,<sup>5</sup> with myn owen honde, in witnesse of my laste wille, and ensealede with my seal.

## THE LIBEL OF ENGLISH POLICY

*The Libel (or Little Book) of English Policy*, a plea for a strong navy, was written, according to internal evidence, after the siege of Calais by the Duke of Burgundy, in 1436, and before the death of the Emperor Sigismund in 1437. The siege of Calais, though unsuccessful, had roused England to a sense of the importance of controlling the straits; and the author of this poem, who is unknown, cleverly shows how all the commerce of Europe (generally directed toward the Low Countries) must needs pass through 'the narrow sea.' Control of the sea, therefore, would make England powerful. He reviews the exports and imports of the chief countries of Europe, showing intimate

<sup>1</sup> blood-red

<sup>2</sup> a kind of squirrel-fur

<sup>3</sup> elsewhere

<sup>4</sup> diminishing

<sup>5</sup> named



acquaintance with the commercial life of his age. He may in some respects be compared with Chaucer's merchant, who

wolde the see were kept for any thing  
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle ;  
and his line  
Kepe thou the see, that is the walle of Englund,

recalls Shakespeare (*Rich. II* 2. 1. 48-50, 63) :

This precious stone, set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a float defensive to a house. . . .  
England bound in with the triumphant sea.

His spirit, we are told (Traill, *Social England* 2. 347 ; cf. 340, 344 ff., 406) 'is exactly the spirit which animated the sea-captains and merchant adventurers of the golden age of Elizabeth.'

Our selections are from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2. 157-9, 160-1, 172-3, this text being printed from MS. Oxford Bodl. Laud. 704. Other editions are by Hertzberg (1878) and in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, Glasgow, 1903, 2. 114-47. Emendations in the following pages are from the two other editions noted; *ff* has been changed to *f*.

The trewe processe of Englysh polycye —  
Of utterwarde<sup>1</sup> to kepe thys regne<sup>2</sup> in rest  
Of oure Englund, that no man may denye,  
Nere<sup>3</sup> say of soth but it is one the best —  
Is thys, that who seith<sup>4</sup> Southe, Northe, Est, and West,      5  
Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe th' amyralte,<sup>5</sup>  
That we bee maysteres of the narowe see.<sup>6</sup>

For Sigesmonde, the grete emperoure  
Whyche yet regneth, whan<sup>7</sup> he was in this londe  
Wyth Kynge Herry the Fifte,<sup>8</sup> prince of honoure,      10  
Here moche glorye, as hym thought, he fonde<sup>9</sup> ;  
A myghty londe, whyche hadde take on honde  
To werre<sup>10</sup> in Fraunce and make mortalite,  
And evere welle kepe<sup>11</sup> rounde aboute the see.

<sup>1</sup> from (foes) without

<sup>2</sup> kingdom

<sup>3</sup> nor

<sup>4</sup> professes to be of (?)

<sup>5</sup> the admiralty

<sup>6</sup> the Straits of Dover

<sup>7</sup> In 1416

<sup>8</sup> MS. V<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> MS. founde

<sup>10</sup> war

<sup>11</sup> MS. kept

And to the kyng thus he seyde: ' My brothere ' —

Whan he perceyved too townes, Calys<sup>1</sup> and Dover —

' Of alle youre townes to chese of one and othere,

To kepe the see, and sone to come overe

5 To werre oughtwardes,<sup>2</sup> and youre regne to recover,

Kepe these too townes, sire, to<sup>3</sup> youre mageste

As youre twayne eyne,<sup>4</sup> to kepe the narowe see.'

For if this see be kepte in tyme of werre,

Who cane here passe withought daungere and woo?

10 Who may eschape, who may myschef dyfferre<sup>5</sup>?

What marchaundye<sup>6</sup> may forby be agoo<sup>7</sup>?

For nedes hem muste take truse<sup>8</sup> every foo —

Flaundres, and Spayne, and othere, trust to me —

Or ellis hyndered alle for thys narowe see.

15 Therefore I caste me, by a lytele wrytinge,

To shewe att eye<sup>9</sup> thys conclusion,

For concyens, and for myne acquytyng

Ayent God, and ageyne abusyon

And cowardyse, and to oure enmyes confusione;

20 For iiij thynges our noble<sup>10</sup> sheueth to me —

Kyng, shype, and swerde, and pouer of the see.

Where bene oure shippes, where bene oure swerdes, become<sup>11</sup>?

Oure enmyes bid for the shippe sette a shepe.

Allas! oure reule halteth, hit is benome<sup>12</sup>;

25 Who dare weel say that lordeshyppe shulde take kepe<sup>13</sup>?

I wolde asaye, thoughe myne herte gynne to wepe,

To do thys werke, yf we wole ever the,<sup>14</sup>

For verry shame, to kepe aboute the see.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Calais

<sup>2</sup> outwards, in foreign lands

<sup>3</sup> MS. and

<sup>4</sup> eyes

<sup>5</sup> postpone

<sup>6</sup> merchandise

<sup>7</sup> be carried past

<sup>8</sup> make terms (with Eng-  
land)

<sup>9</sup> to the eye

<sup>10</sup> the gold coin called the  
noble

<sup>11</sup> what has become of

<sup>12</sup> taken away

<sup>13</sup> heed

<sup>14</sup> prosper

<sup>15</sup> guard the circuit of the  
Channel

Shalle any prynce, what so be hys name,  
 Wheche hathe nobles moche lyche oures,  
 Be lorde of see, and Flemmyngis to oure blame  
 Stoppe us, take us, and so make fade the floures  
 Of Englysshe state, and disteyne <sup>1</sup> oure honnoures ? 5  
 For cowardyse, allas ! hit shulde so be ;  
 Therefore I gynne to wryte now of the see.  
 Knowe welle alle men that profites in certayne,<sup>2</sup>  
 Commoditytes called, commynge out of Spayne,  
 And marchandy,<sup>3</sup> who so wylle wete what that is, 10  
 Bene fygues, raysyns, wyne bastarde,<sup>4</sup> and dates ;  
 And lycorys, Syvyle <sup>5</sup> oyle, and grayne,<sup>6</sup>  
 Whyte Castelle <sup>7</sup> sope, and wax, is not in vayne ;  
 Iren, wolle, wadmole,<sup>8</sup> gotefel,<sup>9</sup> kydefel <sup>10</sup> also —  
 For poynt-makers <sup>11</sup> fulle nedefulle be the two — 15  
 Saffron, quiksilver, wheche arne Spaynes marchandy,  
 Is into Flaundres shynned fulle craftylye,  
 Unto Bruges, as to here staple <sup>12</sup> fayre ;  
 The haven of Sluse <sup>13</sup> they have <sup>14</sup> for here repayre,<sup>15</sup>  
 Wheche is cleped Swyn, thaire shynnes gydyng, 20  
 Where many vessells <sup>16</sup> and fayre arne abydyng.  
 But these merchandes, wyth there shynnes greet,  
 And suche chaffare <sup>17</sup> as they bye and gette  
 By the weyes, most nede take one honde  
 By the costes to passe of oure Englonde. . . . 25  
 And whenne these seyde marchauntz discharged be  
 Of marchaundy in Flaundres neere the see,  
 Than they be charged agayn wyth marchaundy  
 That to Flaundres longeth <sup>18</sup> full rychelye ;

<sup>1</sup> sully<sup>2</sup> certain things<sup>3</sup> merchandise<sup>4</sup> a sweet wine, like muscadell<sup>5</sup> Seville<sup>6</sup> kermes<sup>7</sup> Castile<sup>8</sup> a coarse, hairy, woollen cloth<sup>9</sup> goatskin<sup>10</sup> kidskin<sup>11</sup> those who made leather

lacing-strings

<sup>12</sup> market<sup>13</sup> Sluys<sup>14</sup> MS. here havene<sup>15</sup> for them to resort to<sup>16</sup> vessels ; MS. wessell<sup>17</sup> merchandise<sup>18</sup> belongs ; MS. bougeth  
(em. Hertzberg)

19. Sluse : Edward III's naval victory at Sluys in 1340 gave England the mastery of the Channel for centuries.

Fyne clothe of Ipre,<sup>1</sup> that named is better than oure is,  
 Cloothe of Curtryke,<sup>2</sup> fyne cloothe of alle coloures,  
 Moche fustyane, and also lynyen cloothe.

But ye Flemmyngis, yf ye be not wrothe,  
 5 The grete substaunce of youre cloothe, at the fulle,  
 Ye wot ye make hit of oure <sup>8</sup> Englissh wolles. . . .

The Janueys <sup>4</sup> comyne in sondre wyses  
 Into this londe, wyth dyverse marchaundyses,  
 In grete karrekis,<sup>5</sup> arrayde wythouten lake  
 10 Wyth clothes of golde, silke, and pepir blake  
 They bringe wyth hem, and of wood <sup>6</sup> grete plente,  
 Woole-oyle, wood-aschen,<sup>7</sup> by vessels <sup>8</sup> in the see,  
 Cotton, roche-alum,<sup>9</sup> and gode golde of Jene.<sup>10</sup>  
 And they be charged wyth wolles ageyne, I wene,  
 15 And wollene clothe of owres, of colours alle.  
 And they aventure, as ofte it dothe byfalle,  
 Into Flaundes wyth suche thynges as they bye,  
 That is here <sup>11</sup> cheffe staple sykerlye <sup>12</sup>;  
 And if they wolde be oure fulle ennemyse,  
 20 They shulde not passe our stremez with merchaundyse. . . .

The grete galees <sup>13</sup> of Venees and Florence  
 Be wel ladene wyth thynges of complacence,<sup>14</sup>  
 Alle spicerye and <sup>15</sup> grocers ware,  
 Wyth swete wynes, alle manere of chaffare,  
 25 Apes, and japes,<sup>16</sup> and marmusettes taylorde,<sup>17</sup>  
 Niffes,<sup>18</sup> trifles, that litelle have availede,  
 And thynges wyth whiche they fetely <sup>19</sup> blere <sup>20</sup> oure eye,  
 Wyth thynges not enduryng that we bye—  
 For moche of this chaffare that is wastable  
 30 Mighte be forborne, for <sup>21</sup> dere and dyssevable.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ypres, in Belgium

<sup>2</sup> Courtrai, in Belgium

<sup>3</sup> MS. youre

<sup>4</sup> Genoese

<sup>5</sup> caracks, galleons

<sup>6</sup> woad (blue dyestuff)

<sup>7</sup> wood-ashes; MS. woad-

<sup>8</sup> MS. wesshelle

<sup>9</sup> rock alum

<sup>10</sup> Genoa

<sup>11</sup> their

<sup>12</sup> in truth

<sup>13</sup> galleys

<sup>14</sup> things that give pleasure,  
 articles of luxury

<sup>15</sup> MS. and of

<sup>16</sup> trinkets

<sup>17</sup> marmosets with tails

<sup>18</sup> baubles, 'notions'

<sup>19</sup> cleverly

<sup>20</sup> dim

<sup>21</sup> as

<sup>22</sup> deceptive

## THE GUILD OF ST. LEONARD

The following account of the guild of St. Leonard was returned to the 'King in Council, by order of Parliament,' in 1389. Our text of it is taken from Toulmin Smith's *English Gilds* (E.E.T.S. 40. 49-50).

*In honore Sancti Leonardi confessoris.* In þe worchep of God alle-  
myghti, and of his modir Seynt Mary, and of alle þe holy company of  
heven, and specially of þe holy confessour Seynt Leonard, þis gilde  
was begonne in Damgate in þe toun of Lenne,<sup>1</sup> þorow þe devocion  
of men and women, to fyndyn<sup>2</sup> befor on ymage in þe Chirche of 5  
Seynt Jame of Lenn, in þe worchep of God and of Seynt Leonard, on  
candelle of i li.<sup>3</sup> waxe, to brenne every<sup>4</sup> festivale day in þe gere, afor  
þe ymage of Seynt Leonard. Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of  
alle þe bretheryn, þat everiche brothir and sistir shal offren at þe  
chirche of Seynt Jame, on þe Soneday nexte aftir þe fest of Seynt 10  
Leonard,<sup>5</sup> ob.,<sup>6</sup> in þe worchep of God and Seynt Leonard. Alleso it  
is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethren, to have foure morspeches<sup>7</sup>  
in þe gere. Þe firste shal bene þe Moneday neste aftir þe forseide  
Soneday. And at þat mornspeche, þorow on assent of alle þe brethen,  
to chesen<sup>8</sup> an aldirman, wise and able to reule þe company to þe 15  
worchep of God; and also foure men for to reseveren and kepyn  
þe katel<sup>9</sup> of þe gilde; and also on certayne oficere to warnyn alle þe  
brethren to comyn to chirche; and also on clerke, to wryten þe katel  
of þe gilde. Þe secunde morspeche shal bene aftir þe Purificacioun  
of our Levedy.<sup>10</sup> Þe thred, aftir þe feste of Phelip and Jacob.<sup>11</sup> Þe 20  
fourte, aftir þe feste of Seynt Petre *Ad Vincula*.<sup>12</sup> Alleso it is ordeyned,  
be on assent of þe brethren, be als mečil as<sup>13</sup> þe lyght fornseide ne  
may nout be meyntened in þe tyme for to come, every man þat wille  
with good devocion comyn into þis ffraternite shal pay iii s. Alleso,  
if any brothir or sistir deye, þe aldirman shal comand þe oficere to 25  
warnyn alle þe bretheryn and sisteryn to bryng þe cors to þe chirche,

<sup>1</sup> Lynn (King's Lynn, of  
Norfolk)

<sup>2</sup> provide

<sup>3</sup> one pound

<sup>4</sup> MS. overy

<sup>5</sup> St. Leonard's day is Nov. 6

<sup>6</sup> a half-penny (obolus)

<sup>7</sup> periodical assemblies held  
on the morrow after the  
guild-feast

<sup>8</sup> choose

<sup>9</sup> property

<sup>10</sup> Feb. 2

<sup>11</sup> Philip and James;  
May 1

<sup>12</sup> Aug. 1

<sup>13</sup> inasmuch as

with waxe brennend, and þe waxe for to brenne in þe tyme of service. And every broþir and sistir shal offren at þe messe for þe body ob. Ze fe any brothir or sistir of þis company be in any mischefe, þorow losse of þe se,<sup>1</sup> or any other myshappes, þorow Godes<sup>2</sup> sond,<sup>3</sup> þe company shal ben gadered togedir and helpyn hym. Ze fe any broþer or sistir of þis gild dye within a mile abouten, and have nout whereof to bryng hym to þe erthe,<sup>4</sup> þe aldirman and þe gilde-brethren shuln wend, and bryng hym to þe erthe on þeire owe costages.<sup>5</sup> And if any broþir dye within þe iii mile aboutyn, þe aldirman shal gon and beryne<sup>6</sup> hym, or ellis hyren a man of here costages to bryng hym to þe erthe. Þere shal no broþir ne sistir sene othir in prison, þat<sup>7</sup> he shal comyn and vesyten hym, and comfordyn hym in his powere. Also, if any broþir or sistir of þis gild dye, he shal have xv messes songyn for his soule. Also, what man or woman of þis gilde be rebel ageyne þe lawe of  
 15 Holy Chirche, he shal lese<sup>8</sup> þe fraternite of þis gilde tille he come to amendment.

Be it open to ȝow, be þes presentes, þat we, fulliche undirstondend ȝour lettres sent to us, seyend on þis manere, þat we shuld send ȝow a kopy of our statuz, and also þe summe of our katel, we do ȝow  
 20 openliche to wetyn þat þe summe of our katel is xxi s. viii d., redy to our lord þe kinges wille.

<sup>1</sup> at sea<sup>2</sup> MS. goodes<sup>3</sup> dispensation<sup>4</sup> bury him<sup>5</sup> at their own expense<sup>6</sup> bury<sup>7</sup> but that<sup>8</sup> lose

## TRANSLATIONS

### CHAUCER, THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

The *Roman de la Rose*, one of the most celebrated and influential poems of the Middle Ages, is the work of two poets, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the former writing about 1237, and the latter about 1277. Of the 22,817 lines in Michel's edition (the most accessible), Guillaume wrote 4669, and Jean the remainder. Gaston Paris has characterized Guillaume's part by its use of the dream as a frame; of allegory (the maiden as a rose); of a garden as the scene of the poem; and of personification. Jean de Meun's part is more formless, and makes much parade of learning.

The translation into Middle English consists of 7698 lines. Until about 1868 Chaucer's authorship of the whole of this version was not doubted, especially as Cupid is represented as saying to Chaucer, in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (B):

For in pleyn text, withouten nede of glose,  
Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose.

At present three divisions are recognized: 1-1705 (A), 1706-5810 (B), 5811-7698 (C), corresponding respectively to 1-1678, 1679-5875, and 11,444-13,299 of the French (Michel's edition). Nearly all scholars agree that A is by Chaucer, and that B is not; Kaluza believes that C is also by Chaucer, but this view has not been generally accepted.

Through Guillaume de Digulleville, or Guileville (d. about 1360), the French *Roman* may have had an influence on the *Pilgrim's Progress* (see Hammond, Chaucer, pp. 76-7).

For the French original, see Gaston Paris, *Litt. Fr. au Moyen Age*, chap. 5; Petit de Julleville, *Hist. de la Langue et de la Litt. Fr.* 2. 105-61 (Langlois); Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 78-9; where bibliographies may be found. The *Roman* has been translated into English by F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics, 3 vols.). For a bibliography of the English translation, see Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 450-4.

The subjoined text is based upon the reprint of the unique manuscript (Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, V. 3. 7) by Kaluza, issued by the Chaucer Society in 1891. Omissions in the manuscript have been supplied from Thynne's edition, and a few emendations have been admitted. The extracts below are, respectively, lines 49-89, 110-43, 349-68. To lines 71-89 of the version I subjoin 67-83 of the French (Michel), for the purpose of comparison.

## THE JOYS OF SPRING

That it was May me thought[e] tho,  
 It is v yere or more ago ;  
 That it was May, thus dremed me,  
 In tyme of love and jolite,  
 5 That al thing gynneth waxen gay,  
 For ther is neither busk <sup>1</sup> nor hay <sup>2</sup>  
 In May, that it nyl shrouded <sup>3</sup> bene,  
 And it with newe leves wrene.<sup>4</sup>  
 These wodes eek recoveren gr[e]ne,  
 10 That drie in wynter ben to sene ;  
 And the erth wexith proude withall,  
 For swote <sup>5</sup> dewes that on it fall,  
 And the pore estat forgette  
 In which that winter had it sette ;  
 15 And than bycometh the ground so proude  
 That it wole have a newe shroude,  
 And makith so queynt his robe and faire  
 That it hath <sup>6</sup> hewes an hundred payre  
 Of gras and flouris, ynde<sup>7</sup> and pers,<sup>8</sup>  
 20 And many hewes ful dyvers ;  
 [That is the robe I] <sup>9</sup> mene, iwis,  
 [Through whiche the] ground to preisen<sup>10</sup> is.  
 [The byrdes, that ha]ven lefte her song,  
 While thei [han suffr]ide cold so strong  
 25 In wedres gryl,<sup>11</sup> and derk to sight,  
 Ben in May, for the sonne bright,  
 So glade, that they shewe in. syngyng  
 That in her hertis is sich lykyng  
 That they mote syngen and be light.  
 30 Than doth the nyghtyngale hir myght

<sup>1</sup> bush<sup>2</sup> hedge<sup>3</sup> clothed<sup>4</sup> cover<sup>5</sup> sweet<sup>6</sup> MS. had (em. Skeat)<sup>7</sup> dark blue (indigo)<sup>8</sup> sky-blue<sup>9</sup> From Thynne's edition,  
and so the next lines<sup>10</sup> to be praised, admired<sup>11</sup> disagreeable



To make noyse, and syngen blythe ;  
 Than is blisful, many sithe,  
 The chela[un]dre <sup>1</sup> and [the] papyngay.<sup>2</sup>  
 Than yong[e] folk entenden ay  
 For to ben gay and amorous, 5  
 The tyme is than so faverous.<sup>3</sup>  
 Hard is the hert that loveth nought  
 In May, whan al this mirth is wrought,  
 Whan he may on these braunches here  
 The smale briddes syngen clere 10  
 Her blesful swete song pitous.

Li oisel, qui se sunt teü  
 Tant com il ont le froit eü,  
 Et le tens divers et frarin,  
 Sunt en Mai, por le tens serin,  
 Si lié qu'il monstrent en chantant 5  
 Qu'en lor cuer a de joie tant,  
 Qu'il lor estuet chanter par force.  
 Li rossignos lores s'esforce  
 De chanter et de faire noise ;  
 Lors s'esvertue, et lors s'envoise 10  
 Li papegaus et la kalandre :  
 Lors estuet jones gens entendre  
 A estre gais et amoureux  
 Por le tens bel et doucereus.  
 Moult a dur cuer qui en Mai n'aime, 15  
 Quant il ot chanter sus la raimé  
 As oisiaus les dous chans piteus.

<sup>1</sup> a kind of lark (a Mediterranean species)<sup>2</sup> parrot, popinjay<sup>3</sup> favorable

## THE RIVER AND THE GARDEN

Toward a ryver gan I me dresse<sup>1</sup>  
 That I herd renne fast[e] by ;  
 For fairer playyng non saugh I  
 Than playen me by that ryvere,  
 5 For from an hill that stood ther nere  
 Cam doun the streme ful stif and bold.  
 Cleer was the water, and as cold  
 [As any welle is, sot]<sup>2</sup>h to seyn ;  
 [And somdele lasse<sup>3</sup>] it was than Seyn,  
 10 [But it was stray]ghter wel away.  
 [And never sau]gh I, er that day,  
 The watir that so wel lyked<sup>4</sup> me ;  
 And wondir glad was I to se  
 That lusty place, and that ryvere ;  
 15 And with that watir that ran so clere  
 My face I wysshe.<sup>5</sup> Tho saugh I well  
 The botme paved everydell  
 With gravel, ful of stones shene.<sup>6</sup>  
 The medewe softe, swote,<sup>7</sup> and grene,  
 20 Beet<sup>8</sup> right on the watirsyde.  
 Ful clere was than the morowtyde,<sup>9</sup>  
 And ful attempre,<sup>10</sup> out of drede.  
 Tho gan I walk thorough the mede,  
 Dounward ay in my pleiying,  
 25 The ryversyde costeiying.<sup>11</sup>  
 And whan I had a while goon,  
 I saugh a gardyn right anoon,  
 Ful long and brood, and everydell  
 Enclosed was, and walled well,  
 30 With high[e] walles enbatailled,  
 Portraied without, and wel entailed<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> direct<sup>2</sup> From Thynne, and so next lines<sup>3</sup> smaller<sup>4</sup> pleased<sup>5</sup> washed<sup>6</sup> glistening<sup>7</sup> sweet<sup>8</sup> adjoined (*lit.* beat upon)<sup>9</sup> morning<sup>10</sup> mild<sup>11</sup> coasting, skirting<sup>12</sup> carved

With many riche portraitures ;  
 And bothe the ymages and the peyntures  
 Gan I biholde bysly.

## THE PICTURE OF OLD AGE

Elde<sup>1</sup> was [i]paynted after this,  
 That shorter was a foote, iwys, 5  
 Than she was wont in her yonghede.<sup>2</sup>  
 Unneth<sup>3</sup> herselfe she might[e] fede ;  
 So feble and eke so olde was she  
 That faded was al her beaute.  
 Ful salowe was waxen hir coloure, 10  
 Hir heed for hore<sup>4</sup> was whyte as floure ;  
 Iwys, great qualme<sup>5</sup> ne were it none,  
 Ne synne, although her lyfe were gone.  
 Al woxen was her body unwelde,<sup>6</sup>  
 And drie and dwyned<sup>7</sup> al for elde ; 15  
 A foule forwelked<sup>8</sup> thyng was she  
 That whylom rounde and soft had be.  
 Hir eeres shoken faste withall,  
 As from her heed they wolde fall.  
 Her face frounced<sup>9</sup> and forpyned,<sup>10</sup> 20  
 And bothe hir hondes lorne,<sup>11</sup> fordwyned.<sup>12</sup>  
 So olde she was that she ne went  
 A foote, but it were by potent.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> old age  
<sup>2</sup> youth  
<sup>3</sup> with difficulty  
<sup>4</sup> hoariness  
<sup>5</sup> evil

<sup>6</sup> unwieldy, impotent  
<sup>7</sup> dwindled  
<sup>8</sup> withered  
<sup>9</sup> wrinkled

<sup>10</sup> wasted away  
<sup>11</sup> forlorn  
<sup>12</sup> shrunken  
<sup>13</sup> crutch

## CHAUCER'S TRANSLATION OF BOETHIUS

Boethius (ca. 475-524) was a Roman patrician and consul in the reign of Theodoric. His *Consolation of Philosophy*, said to have been written during his imprisonment by Theodoric, is preserved in hundreds of manuscripts, and was regarded as the standard handbook of philosophy until the Renaissance. This book, which is partly in verse and partly in prose, was translated into prose by Chaucer, while allusions to it, and versions or paraphrases of many passages, are scattered through his works. See Cook and Tinker, *Sel. Trans. from Old Eng. Prose*, p. 116, and the works mentioned there.

The passages here printed are from Book 2 (Metre 5, and a bit of Prose 6), and comprise (1) Chaucer's prose; (2) the original Latin; (3) a few lines of the Old English translations, prose and verse, due to King Alfred; (4) a portion of Chaucer's *The Former Age* (following MS. Camb. Univ. II. 3. 21), which is partly a paraphrase of the same passage. It will be noted that various glosses rendered by Chaucer in the prose version are printed in italics. The Latin lines corresponding to a given part of the first version are indicated in square brackets.

[1-5] Blisful was the first age of men! They helden hem apayed<sup>1</sup> with the metes<sup>2</sup> that the trewe<sup>3</sup> felde broughten forth. They ne destroyede nor deceivede nat himself with outrage.<sup>4</sup> They weren wont lightly to slaken hir hunger at even with acornes of okes. [6-10] They  
 5 ne coude nat medle<sup>5</sup> the yifte of Bachus to the cleer hony; *that is to seyn, they coude make no piment<sup>6</sup> nor clarree<sup>7</sup>*; ne they coude nat medle the brighte fleeces of the contree of Seriens<sup>8</sup> with the venim<sup>9</sup> of Tyrie<sup>10</sup>; *this is to seyn, they coude nat deyen whyte fleeces of Serien contree with the blode of a maner shelfisshe that men finden in Tyrie,*  
 10 *with whiche blood men deyen purpur.* They slepen hoolsom slepes upon the gras, [11-15] and dronken of the renninge wateres; and layen under the shadwes of the heye pyn-trees. Ne no gest ne straungere ne carf<sup>11</sup> yit the heye see with ores or with shippes; ne they ne hadde seyn yit none newe strondes, to leden marchaundyse into dy-  
 15 verse contrees. [16-20] Tho weren the cruel clariouns ful hust<sup>12</sup> and ful stille, ne blood yshad by egre<sup>13</sup> hate ne hadde nat deyed

<sup>1</sup> contented, satisfied<sup>2</sup> kinds of food<sup>3</sup> faithful<sup>4</sup> excess<sup>5</sup> mingle, mix; MS. medly<sup>6</sup> wine mixed with honey (*usu-ally* spiced wine)<sup>7</sup> wine mixed with honey, and then clarified<sup>8</sup> Chinese<sup>9</sup> dye<sup>10</sup> Tyre<sup>11</sup> cut<sup>12</sup> silent, hushed<sup>13</sup> fierce, bitter

yit armures.<sup>1</sup> For wherto or which woodnesse<sup>2</sup> of enemys wolde first moeven<sup>3</sup> armes, [21-26] whan they seyen cruel woundes, ne none medes<sup>4</sup> be of blood yshad? I wolde that oure tymes sholde torne ayein to the olde maneres! But the anguissous<sup>5</sup> love of havinge brenneth in folk more cruelly than the fyr of the mountaigne Ethna, *that ay* 5 *brenneth*. [27-30] Allas! what was he that first dalf<sup>6</sup> up the gobetes<sup>7</sup> or the weightes of gold covered under erthe, and the precious stones that wolden han ben hid? He dalf up precious perils. *That is to seyn, that he that hem first up dalf, he dalf up a precious peril; forwhy*<sup>8</sup> *for the preciousnesse of swiche thinge hath many man ben in peril.* 10

[Prose] But what shal I seye of dignitees and of powers, the whiche ye men, that neither knowen verray<sup>9</sup> dignitee ne verray power, areysen<sup>10</sup> hem as heye as the hevene? The whiche dignitees and powers, yif they comen to any wikked man, they don as grete damages and destrucciouns as doth the flaumbe<sup>11</sup> of the mountaigne 15 Ethna, whan the flaumbe walweth<sup>12</sup> up; ne no deluge ne doth so cruel harmes.

Felix nimium prior ætas,  
 Contenta fidelibus arvis  
 Nec inertī perdita luxu, 20  
 Facili quæ sera solebat  
 Jejunia solvere glande.  
 Non Bacchica munera norant  
 Liquido confundere melle,  
 Nec lucida vellera Serum 25  
 Tyrio miscere veneno.  
 Somnos dabat herba salubres,  
 Potum quoque lubricus amnis,  
 Umbras altissima pinus.  
 Nondum maris alta secabat, 30  
 Nec mercibus undique lectis  
 Nova litora viderat hospes.

<sup>1</sup> armor  
<sup>2</sup> madness, rage  
<sup>3</sup> stir up  
<sup>4</sup> rewards

<sup>5</sup> tormenting  
<sup>6</sup> dug  
<sup>7</sup> lumps  
<sup>8</sup> wherefore

<sup>9</sup> true  
<sup>10</sup> exalt  
<sup>11</sup> flame  
<sup>12</sup> rolls, tosses

- Tunc classica sæva tacebant,  
 Odiis neque fusus acerbis  
 Cruor horrida tinxerat arva.  
 Quid enim furor hosticus ulla  
 5 Vellét prior arma movere,  
 Cum vulnera sæva viderent,  
 Nec præmia sanguinis ulla?  
 Utinam modo nostra redirent  
 In mores tempora prisca!  
 10 Sed, sævior ignibus Ætnæ,  
 Fervens amor ardet habendi.  
 Heu! primus quis fuit ille  
 Auri qui pondera tecti,  
 Gemmasque latere volentes,  
 15 Pretiosa pericula, fodit?

Quid autem de dignitatibus potentiaque disseram qua vos veræ dignitatis ac potestatis inscii cælo exæquatis? Quæ si in improbissimum quemque ceciderunt quæ flammis Ætnæ eructuantibus, quod diluvium tantas strages dederint?

- 20 Trēowa wæstmas hī æton and wyrta; nalles scīr wīn hī ne druncan,  
 nē nanne wætan hī ne cūpon wið hunige menga, nē seolocenra hrægla  
 mid mistlicum blēowum hī ne gīmdon. Ealne weg hī slēpon ūte on  
 triowa sceadum; hlūterra wella wæter hī druncon. Ne geseah nān  
 cēpa ēaland ne weroð, nē gehērde nōn mon þā gēt nāne scīphere.

- 25 And hī æne on dæge æton symle  
 On æfentid eorþan wæstmas,  
 Wudes and wyrta; nalles wīn druncon  
 Scīr of stēape. Næs þā scealca nān  
 þe mete oððe drinc mængan cūðe,  
 30 Wæter wið hunige, nē heora wæda þon mā  
 Sioloe siowian, nē hī siarocræftum  
 Godweb giredon, nē hī gimreced  
 Setton searolice, ac hī simle him  
 Eallum tidum ūte slēpon

Under bēamsceade; druncon burnan wæter,  
 Calde wellan. Nænig cēpa ne seah  
 Ofer ēargeblond ellendne wearod,  
 Nē hūru ymbe sciphergas sǣtilcas ne hērdon.

## THE FORMER AGE

A blysfyl lyf, a paysyble and a swete, 5  
 Ledden the poeples in the former age;  
 They helde hem paied<sup>1</sup> of fructes<sup>2</sup> þat þey ete,  
 Whiche þat the feldes yave hem by usage<sup>3</sup>;  
 They ne weere nat forpampred<sup>4</sup> with owtrage.<sup>5</sup>  
 Onknowyn was þe quyerne<sup>6</sup> and ek the melle<sup>7</sup>; 10  
 They eten mast, hawes, and swych pownage,<sup>8</sup>  
 And dronken water of the colde welle.

Yit nas the grownd nat wownded with þe plowh,  
 But corn upsprong, unsowe of mannes hond,  
 Þe which they gnodded,<sup>9</sup> and eete nat half inowh. 15  
 No man yit knewe the forwes<sup>10</sup> of his lond;  
 No man the fyr owt of the flynt yit fonde;  
 Unkorven<sup>11</sup> and ungrobbed<sup>12</sup> lay the vyne;  
 No man yit in the mortar spices grond,  
 To<sup>13</sup> clarre ne to sawse of galentyne.<sup>14</sup> 20

No madyr,<sup>15</sup> welde,<sup>16</sup> or wod<sup>17</sup> no litestere<sup>18</sup>  
 Ne knewh; the fles<sup>19</sup> was of [h]is former hewe;  
 No flessch ne wyste offence of egge<sup>20</sup> or spere;  
 No coyn ne knewh man which was<sup>21</sup> fals or trewe;

<sup>1</sup> satisfied  
<sup>2</sup> MS. the fructes  
<sup>3</sup> customarily, regularly  
<sup>4</sup> pampered  
<sup>5</sup> excess  
<sup>6</sup> hand-mill  
<sup>7</sup> mill  
<sup>8</sup> swine's food  
<sup>9</sup> rubbed, bruised; cf. *Rom.*  
*Rose* 9124 (the whole

passage seems imitated  
 from Boethius): 'Et des  
 epis des blés frotoient'  
<sup>10</sup> furrows  
<sup>11</sup> unpruned  
<sup>12</sup> not digged round  
<sup>13</sup> for  
<sup>14</sup> a mixture of ginger, grated  
 bread, vinegar, etc.  
<sup>15</sup> madder

<sup>16</sup> dyeweed, yellowweed  
<sup>17</sup> woad  
<sup>18</sup> dyer  
<sup>19</sup> fleece  
<sup>20</sup> edge  
<sup>21</sup> MS. is

No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe ;  
 No marchaunt yit ne fette owtlandissh ware ;  
 No trompes<sup>1</sup> for the werres folk ne knewe,  
 Ne towres heye, and walles rownde or square.

- 5        What sholde it han avayled to werreye<sup>2</sup> ?  
        Ther lay no profyt, ther was no rychesse ;  
        But corsed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,  
        þat men fyrst dede hir swety bysynesse  
        To grobbe up metal, lurkyng in derknesse,<sup>3</sup>  
 10      And in þe ryverys fyrst[e] gemmys sowhte.  
        Allas ! than sprong up al the cursydnesse  
        Of coveytyse, þat fyrst owr sorwe browhte.

### WYCLIFFITE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

The extracts here given are from the second Wycliffite version of the Vulgate (ca. 1388), which is not so awkwardly literal as the earlier (ca. 1380). An interesting study of the Wycliffite Epistle to the Romans, compared with the Latin and another (fragmentary) Middle English rendering, has been published by Dr. Emma C. Tucker (*Yale Studies in English*, No. 49).

#### JOB 41.20-28 ; 42.4-25

- Whether thou schalt mowe drawe out levyathan with an hook, and  
 schalt bynde with a roop his tunge ? Whethir thou schalt putte a  
 15 ryng in hise nothirlis, ethir schalt perse hyse cheke with an hook ?  
 Whether he schal multiplie preieris to thee, ether schal speke softe  
 thingis to thee ? Whether he schal make covenauant with thee, and  
 thou schalt take him a servaunt everlastinge ? Whether thou schalt  
 scorne hym as a brid, ethir schalt bynde hym to thin handmaidis ?  
 20 Schulen frendis kerve hym ? schulen marchauntis departe hym ?  
 Whether thou schalt fille nettis with his skyn, and a leep<sup>4</sup> of fischis  
 with his heed ? Schalt thou putte thin hond on hym ? have thou  
 mynde of the batel, and adde no more to speke. Lo, his hope schal  
 disseyve hym ; and in the sigt of alle men he schal be cast down. . . .

<sup>1</sup> MS. batails trompes

<sup>2</sup> fight

<sup>3</sup> MS. dirkenesse

<sup>4</sup> basket



Who schal schewe the face of his clothing, and who schal entre into the myddis of his mouth? Who schal opene the gatis of his cheer<sup>1</sup>? ferdfulnesse<sup>2</sup> is bi the cumpas of hise teeth. His bodi is as gotun<sup>3</sup> scheldys of bras, and joyned togidere with scalis overleiynge hemsilf.<sup>4</sup> Oon is joyned to another, and sotheli brething goith not thoroug<sup>5</sup> tho.<sup>5</sup> Oon schal cleve to anothir, and tho holdynge hemsilf schulen not be departid.<sup>6</sup> His fnesynge<sup>7</sup> is as schynynge of fier, and hise iȝen<sup>8</sup> ben as iȝelidis of the morewtid.<sup>9</sup> Laumpis comen forth of his mouth, as trees<sup>10</sup> of fier that ben kyndlid. Smoke cometh forth of hise nosethirlis, as of a pot set on the fier and boilynge. His breeth<sup>10</sup> maketh colis to brenne, and flawme goith out of his mouth. Strengthe schal dwelle in his necke, and nedynesse<sup>11</sup> schal go bifor his face. The membris of hise fleischis ben clevynge togidere to hemsilf; God schal sende floodis<sup>12</sup> agens hym, and tho schulen not be borun to another place. His herte schal be maad hard as a stoon; and it schal be<sup>15</sup> streyned<sup>13</sup> togidere as the anefeld<sup>14</sup> of a smith. Whanne he schal be takun awei, aungels schulen drede; and thei, aferd, schulen be purgid.<sup>15</sup> Whanne swerd takith hym, it may not stonde, nethir spere, nether haburjoun.<sup>16</sup> For he schal arette irun as chaffis, and bras as rotun tre. A man archere schal not dryve hym awei; stoonys of a slynge ben<sup>20</sup> turned into stobil to hym. He schal arette<sup>17</sup> an hamer as stobil,<sup>18</sup> and he schal scorne a florischyng<sup>19</sup> spere. The beemys of the sunne schulen be undur hym; and he schal strewe to hymself gold as cley. He schal make the depe se to buyle as a pot; and he schal putte<sup>20</sup> as whanne oynementis buylen. A path schal schyne aftir hym; he<sup>25</sup> schal gesse<sup>21</sup> the greet occian as wexynge eld. No power is on erthe that schal be comparisound to hym, which is maad that he schulde drede noon. He seeth al hiȝ thing; he is kyng over alle the sones of pride.

<sup>1</sup> face<sup>2</sup> terror<sup>3</sup> molten<sup>4</sup> one another<sup>5</sup> them<sup>6</sup> separated<sup>7</sup> sneezing<sup>8</sup> eyes<sup>9</sup> morning<sup>10</sup> torches<sup>11</sup> want, poverty<sup>12</sup> Lat. *fulmina*, read as *flumina*<sup>13</sup> compacted<sup>14</sup> anvil<sup>15</sup> purified<sup>16</sup> breastplate<sup>17</sup> esteem<sup>18</sup> stubble<sup>19</sup> brandishing, waving<sup>20</sup> regard (it)<sup>21</sup> esteem

## JOHN 17.1-6

These thingis Jesus spak, and whanne he hadde cast up hise igen into hevene, he seide: 'Fadir, the our cometh; clarifie<sup>1</sup> thi sone, that thi sone clarifie thee; as thou hast govun to hym power on ech fleisch, that al thing that thou hast govun to hym, he gyve to hem  
 5 everlastynge liif. And this is everlastynge liif, that thei knowe thee very God aloone, and whom thou hast sent, Jesu Crist. Y have clarified thee on the erthe; Y have endid the werk that thou hast govun to me to do. And now, Fadir, clarifie thou me at<sup>2</sup> thisilf, with the clerenesse<sup>3</sup> that Y hadde at thee bifor the world was maad. Y  
 10 have schewid thi name to tho men whiche thou hast govun to me of the world; thei weren thine, and thou hast govun hem to me, and thei han kept thi word.

## REVELATION 14

And Y sai, and lo! a Lomb stood on the mount of Sion, and with hym an hundrid thousynde and foure and fourti thousynde, havynge  
 15 his name, and the name of his Fadir, writun in her forhedis. And Y herde a vois fro hevene, as the vois of many watris, and as the vois of a greet thundur; and the vois which is herd was as of many harperis harpinge in her harpis; and thei sungun as a newe song bifor the seete<sup>4</sup> of God, and bifore the foure beestis and senyouris;  
 20 and no man mihte seie the song but thei, an hundrid thousynde and

<sup>1</sup> glorify<sup>2</sup> with; Lat. *apud*<sup>3</sup> glory<sup>4</sup> throne

1. thingis: cf. the Old English of verses 1-3:

Ðās þing se Hælend spræc, and āhōf ūpp his ēagan tō heofenum, and cwæð: 'Fæder, tid ys cumen; geswutela þinne Sunu, þæt þin Sunu geswutelige þē; and swā þū him sealdest anweald ælces mannes, þæt he sylle ēce lif eallum þām þe þū him sealdest. Ðis ys sōþlice ēce lif, þæt hī oncnāwon þæt þū eart ān sōþ God, and se þe þū sendest, Hælynde Crīst.'

Tyndale has:

These wordes spake Jesus, and lifte uppe his eyes to heaven, and sayde: 'Father, the houre is come; glorify thy Sonne, that thy Sonne maye glorify the; as thou hast geven hym power over all fleshe, that he shulde geve eternal life to as many as thou hast geven him. This is life eternall, that they myght knowe the, that only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.'

foure and fourti thousynde, that ben bougt fro the erthe. These it  
 ben that ben not defoulid with wymmen, for thei ben virgyns. These  
 suen the Lomb whidir ever he schal go. These ben bougt of alle men,  
 the firste fruytis to God and to the Lomb; and in the mouth of hem  
 lesyng<sup>1</sup> is not foundun, for thei ben without wem<sup>2</sup> bifor the trone 5  
 of God. And Y say another aungel, flynge bi the myddil of hevene,  
 havynge an everlastinge gospel that he schulde preche to men sittynge  
 on erthe, and on ech folk, and lynage, and langage, and puple; and  
 seide with a greet vois: 'Drede ge the Lord, and gyve ge to hym  
 onour, for the our of his dom cometh; and worschipe ge hym that 10  
 made hevene and erthe, the see, and alle thingis that ben in hem, and  
 the wellis of wattris.' And anothir aungel sude,<sup>3</sup> seiynge: 'Thilke  
 greet Babiloyne fel doun, fel doun, which gaf drinke to alle folkis of  
 the wyn of wraththe of her fornyacioun.' And the thridde aungel  
 sude hem, and seide with a greet vois: 'If ony man worschipe the 15  
 beeste and the ymage of it, and takith the carecter<sup>4</sup> in his forheed,  
 ether in his hoond, this schal drynke of the wyn of Goddis wraththe,  
 that is meynd<sup>5</sup> with clere wyn in the cuppe of his wraththe, and schal  
 be turmentid with fier and brymston, in the sigt of hooli aungels, and  
 bifore the sigt of the Lomb; and the smoke of her turmentis schal 20  
 stie<sup>6</sup> up into the worldis of worldis; nether thei han reste dai and  
 nigt, whiche worschipiden the beeste and his ymage, and yf ony man  
 take the carect of his name. Here is the pacience of seyntis, whiche  
 kepen the maundementis of God, and the feith of Jesu.' And Y herde  
 a vois fro hevene seiynge to me: 'Write thou, Blessid ben deed men 25  
 that dien in the Lord; fro hennus forth now the Spirit seith that thei  
 reste of her travellis; for the werkis of hem suen hem.' And Y say,<sup>7</sup>  
 and lo a white cloude, and above the cloude a sittere, lik the Sone of  
 man, havynge in his heed a goldun coroun, and in his hond a scharp  
 sikil. And another aungel wente out of the temple, and criede with 30  
 greet vois to hym that sat on the cloude: 'Sende thi sikil, and repe,  
 for the our cometh that it be ropun; for the corn of the erthe is ripe.'  
 And he that sat on the cloude sente his sikil into the erthe, and rap  
 the erthe. And another aungel wente out of the temple that is in

<sup>1</sup> falsehood<sup>2</sup> blemish<sup>3</sup> followed<sup>4</sup> mark<sup>5</sup> mingled<sup>6</sup> rise<sup>7</sup> looked

hevene, and he also hadde a scharp sikile. And another aungel wente out fro the auter, that hadde power on fier and water; and he criede with a greet vois to hym that hadde the scharp sikil, and seide: 'Sende thi scharp sikil, and kitte awei the clustris of the vyngerd  
 5 of the erthe, for the grapis of it ben ripe.' And the aungel sente his sikil into the erthe, and gaderide grapis of the vyngerd of the erthe, and sente into the greet lake of Goddis wraththe. And the lake was troddun without the citee, and the bloode wente out of the lake til to the bridels of horsis, bi furlongis a thousynd and six hundrid.

## VERSIONS OF PSALM 51. 1-3

## LATIN

- 10 Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam; et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam. Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea, et a peccato meo munda me. Quoniam iniquitatem meam cognosco, et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

## ABOUT 1200

*Vices and Virtues*, in Smyth, *Biblical Quotations in Middle English Literature* (Yale Studies in English, No. 41), p. 42.

- 15 Hlaverd, 𐝀 . . after-ðat-ðe ðin mildce ys michel, have ore of mine michele senne; and after ðine manifealde mildces ðe ðu hafst ihafd to mankenne, Hlaverd, do awei fram me ðese michele unrihtwisnesse.

## A.D. 1300-1350

Bülbring, *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, p. 60

- Ha mercy on me, God, efter þy mychel mercy; and efter þe mychelnes of þy pites do way my wickednes. Whasshe me more  
 20 of my wickednes, and clense me of myn synne. For ich knowe my wickednes, and my synne ys evermore ogains me.

A.D. 1350-1400

Horstmann, *Richard Rolle*, pp. 182-3

God, þou have mercy of me,  
 After mikel mercy of þe ;  
 And after of þi reupes þe mikelnes  
 Þou do awai mi wickednes.  
 Nou mare me wasche of min ivel bidene, 5  
 And of mi sinne þou klens me klene.  
 For mi wicke[d]nes I know þat I am inne,  
 And ai ogain me es mi sinne.

ABOUT 1388

Wycliffe

God, have thou merci on me, bi thi greet merci : and bi the mychil-  
 nes of thi merciful doyngis do thou awei my wickidnesse. More 10  
 waische thou me fro my wickidnesse, and clense thou me fro my  
 synne. For Y knowleche my wickidnesse, and my synne is evere  
 aȝeyns me.

ABOUT 1460

*Political, Religious, and Love Songs* (reprint of E.E.T.S. 151, pp. 279-80)

Mercy, God, of my mysdede,  
 For þi mercy þat mychel ys ; 15  
 Lat þi pite sprynge and sprede,  
 Off þi mercy þat I ne mys.  
 After gostly grace I grede<sup>1</sup> ;  
 Good God, þou graunt me þis,  
 þat I may lyve in love and drede, 20  
 And never after do<sup>2</sup> more amys.  
 And after þi mercies þat ben fele,<sup>3</sup>  
 Lord, fordo my wickydnese ;

<sup>1</sup> cry

MS. to do

<sup>3</sup> many

Ȝyve me grace to hyde and hele  
The blame of my bruchelnesse.

Ȝif any sterynge<sup>1</sup> on me stele  
Out of þe clos of þi clennesses,  
5 Wysse me, Lord, in wo and weele,  
And kepe me fram unkyndnesse.

Moreover, wasche me of my synne,  
And of my gultes clanse þow me ;  
And serche my soule without and inne,  
10 That I no more defowlid be.  
And as þyn hert aclef atwynne<sup>2</sup>  
With doleful deth on þe rode-tre,  
Late me never no werke bigynne,  
Lord, but-ȝif<sup>3</sup> it lyke þee.

For al my wickidnesse I knowe,  
And my synne is ever me ageyn ;  
Therfore late þi grace growe,  
15 Jesu, þat was with Jewis sleyn.  
Ryche and pore, hye and lowe,  
20 Smale and gret[e], in certeyn,  
Atte Domesdaie, when þou schalt blowe,  
Of þi mercy schul be ful feyn.

A.D. 1535

Coverdale

Have mercy upon me (O God), after thy goodnes ; and acordinge  
unto thy greate mercies do awaye myne offences. Wash me well fro  
25 my wickednesse, and clense me fro my synne. For I knowlege my  
fautes, and my synne is ever before me.

<sup>1</sup> guidance (?) ; stirring (?)

<sup>2</sup> burst in twain

<sup>3</sup> unless

A.D. 1560

## Geneva Version

Have mercie upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindenes ; according to the multitude of thy compassions put awaie mine iniquities. Wash me throughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me from my sinne. For I knowe mine iniquities, and my sinne is ever before me.

A.D. 1611

## Authorized Version

Have mercie upon mee, O God, according to thy loving kindnesse ; 5 according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash mee throughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me from my sinne. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sinne is ever before mee.

# LYRICS

## CUCKOO SONG

About 1340 (*New Eng. Dict.*). From MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 978, where it is accompanied by the music. The author of this rondel, rota, or round, may perhaps have been John of Fornsete, a monk of the abbey of Reading. The melody is of considerable importance in the history of English music. Sober musical critics have spoken of 'this amazing production,' of its 'ingenuity and beauty,' of 'the airy and pastoral correspondence between the words and the music.' See Grove's *Dict. Music*, 2d ed., 4. 745-54 (cf. 3. 750-1, 765); *Oxford Hist. Music* 1. 326-38 (Wooldridge); *Trans. Phil. Soc.* for 1868, p. 103; E.E.T.S. 7. 419-28. There are facsimiles in Grove (4. 748), Chappell, *Pop. Music of the Olden Time*, and the facsimiles of the Palæographical Society, Part 8, Pl. 125.

*Sing, cuccu, nu* <sup>1</sup>! *Sing, cuccu*!  
*Sing, cuccu*! *Sing, cuccu, nu*!

Sumer is icumen in ;  
Lhude <sup>2</sup> sing, cuccu !  
5 Growep sed, and blowep <sup>3</sup> med,<sup>4</sup>  
And springþ þe wde <sup>5</sup> nu.  
Sing, cuccu !  
Awe <sup>6</sup> bletep after lomb,  
Lhoup <sup>7</sup> after calve cu ;  
10 Bulluc stertep,<sup>8</sup> bucke vertep <sup>9</sup> ;  
Murie <sup>10</sup> sing, cuccu !  
Cuccu ! cuccu !  
Wel singes þu, cuccu ;  
Ne swik <sup>11</sup> þu naver <sup>12</sup> nu.

<sup>1</sup> now  
<sup>2</sup> loudly  
<sup>3</sup> blooms  
<sup>4</sup> mead, meadow  
<sup>5</sup> wood

<sup>6</sup> ewe  
<sup>7</sup> lows  
<sup>8</sup> bounds, frisks (cf. Chaucer, *K.T.* 644 :  
'a courser, *sterting* as the fyr')

<sup>9</sup> *pedit* (Lat.)  
<sup>10</sup> merrily  
<sup>11</sup> cease  
<sup>12</sup> never



## SPRING

About 1310. From Böddeker, *Altenglische Dichtungen des MS. Harl. 2253*, pp. 164-5.

Lenten ys come wip love to toune,<sup>1</sup>  
 Wip blosmen and wip briddes roune,<sup>2</sup>  
 þat al þis blisse bryngeþ;  
 Dayeseȝes<sup>3</sup> in þis<sup>4</sup> dales,  
 Notes suete of nyhtegales;  
 Uch foul song singeþ.  
 The prestelcoc him preteþ<sup>5</sup> oo<sup>6</sup>;  
 Away is huere<sup>7</sup> wynter woo,  
 When woderove<sup>8</sup> springeþ.  
 Þis foules singeþ ferly fele,<sup>9</sup>  
 Ant wlyteþ<sup>10</sup> on huere wynter wele,<sup>11</sup>  
 þat al þe wode ryngeþ.  
 þe rose rayleþ<sup>12</sup> hire rode<sup>13</sup>;  
 The leues on þe lyhte<sup>14</sup> wode  
 Waxen al wip wille.<sup>15</sup>  
 þe mone mandeþ<sup>16</sup> hire bleo<sup>17</sup>;  
 þe lilie is lossom<sup>18</sup> to seo,  
 þe fenyl<sup>19</sup> and þe fille.<sup>20</sup>  
 Woves<sup>21</sup> þis wilde drakes;  
 Miles<sup>22</sup> murgeþ<sup>23</sup> huere makes,<sup>24</sup>  
 Ase strem þat strikeþ<sup>25</sup> stille.  
 Mody<sup>26</sup> menep,<sup>27</sup> so dop<sup>28</sup> mo<sup>29</sup>;  
 Iehot Ycham<sup>30</sup> on of þo,  
 For love þat likes ille.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>1</sup> spring has made its appearance, with love

<sup>2</sup> song

<sup>3</sup> daisies

<sup>4</sup> these

<sup>5</sup> disputes with himself (?)

<sup>6</sup> ever

<sup>7</sup> their

<sup>8</sup> woodruff

<sup>9</sup> wonderfully much

<sup>10</sup> look back

<sup>11</sup> winter's well-being (ironical?)

<sup>12</sup> puts on (as a garment)

<sup>13</sup> ruddiness

<sup>14</sup> fluttering, trembling (transferred epithet, belonging properly to 'leues')

<sup>15</sup> eagerly

<sup>16</sup> sends forth

<sup>17</sup> color

<sup>18</sup> lovely

<sup>19</sup> fennel

<sup>20</sup> chervil

<sup>21</sup> woo

<sup>22</sup> animals (so Mätzner)

<sup>23</sup> delight

<sup>24</sup> mates

<sup>25</sup> flows

<sup>26</sup> disconsolate ones? (cf.

Shakespeare, *King*

*John* 4. 1. 15-16)

<sup>27</sup> lament

<sup>28</sup> MS. *doh*

<sup>29</sup> others

<sup>30</sup> I know I am

<sup>31</sup> annoys, vexes

þe mone mandeþ hire lyht ;  
 So doþ þe semly <sup>1</sup> sonne bryht,  
 When briddes singeþ breme.<sup>2</sup>  
 Deawes donkeþ <sup>3</sup> þe dounes ;  
 5 Deores <sup>4</sup> w[r]iþ <sup>5</sup> huere derne rounes,<sup>6</sup>  
 Domes for te deme <sup>7</sup> ;  
 Wormes woweþ under cloude <sup>8</sup> ;  
 Wymmen waxeþ wounder proude,  
 So wel hit wol hem seme.<sup>9</sup>  
 10 Ȝef me shal wonte wille of on,<sup>10</sup>  
 þis worldes <sup>11</sup> weole <sup>12</sup> Y wole forgon,<sup>13</sup>  
 Ant wyht <sup>14</sup> in wode <sup>15</sup> be fleme.<sup>16</sup>

## WHEN THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS

About 1310. From Böddeker, p. 174

When þe nyhtegale singes,  
 þe wodes waxen grene,  
 15 Lef ant gras ant blosme springes  
 In Averyl, Y wene ;  
 Ant love is to myn herte gon  
 Wiþ one <sup>17</sup> spere so kene,  
 Nyht ant day my blod hit drynkes,  
 20 Myn herte deþ to <sup>18</sup> tene.<sup>19</sup>

Ich have loved al þis ȝer,  
 þat Y may love na more ;  
 Ich have siked <sup>20</sup> moni syk,  
 Lemmon,<sup>21</sup> for þin ore <sup>22</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> goodly<sup>2</sup> gaily<sup>3</sup> wet<sup>4</sup> animals<sup>5</sup> divulge ; cf. Chaucer,  
*Compl. Mars* 91 ; *T.*and *C.* 2. 537<sup>6</sup> their secret communings<sup>7</sup> sentiments to express<sup>8</sup> clod<sup>9</sup> beseem, become<sup>10</sup> if I shall fail to have  
my will of one<sup>11</sup> MS. wunne<sup>12</sup> weal<sup>13</sup> forego<sup>14</sup> bold (?)<sup>15</sup> forest<sup>16</sup> fugitive<sup>17</sup> a<sup>18</sup> Wright (*Spec. Lyr. Poetry*,  
p. 92), me<sup>19</sup> distress, anguish<sup>20</sup> sighed<sup>21</sup> sweetheart<sup>22</sup> favor, grace

Me nis love never þe ner,<sup>1</sup>  
 Ant þat me rewep sore ;  
 Sute lemmon, þench on me,  
 Ich have loved þe ȝore.<sup>2</sup>

Sute lemmon, Y preye þee 5  
 Of love one speche ;  
 Whil Y lyve in world so wyde  
 Oper nulle<sup>3</sup> Y seche.  
 Wiþ þy love, my sute leof,<sup>4</sup>  
 My blis þou mihtes eche<sup>5</sup> ; 10  
 A sute cos<sup>6</sup> of þy mouth  
 Mihte be my leche.<sup>7</sup>

Sute lemmon, Y preȝe þee  
 Of a love-bene<sup>8</sup> .  
 Ȝef þou me lovest, ase men says, 15  
 Lemmon, as I wene,  
 Ant ȝef hit þi wille be,  
 þou loke þat hit be sene ;  
 So muchel Y þenke upon þe  
 þat al Y waxe grene.<sup>9</sup> 20

Bituene Lyncolne ant Lyndeseye,<sup>10</sup>  
 Norhamptoun ant Lounde,<sup>11</sup>  
 Ne wot I non so fayr a may,  
 As I go fore ybounde.<sup>12</sup>  
 Sute lemmon, Y preȝe þe 25  
 þou lovie me a stounde<sup>13</sup> ;  
 Y wole mone my song  
 On wham hit ys ylong.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> nearer<sup>2</sup> long<sup>3</sup> will not<sup>4</sup> dear<sup>5</sup> augment<sup>6</sup> kiss<sup>7</sup> healing<sup>8</sup> love-boon<sup>9</sup> pale<sup>10</sup> Lindsey in Suffolk, about  
100 miles from Lincoln<sup>11</sup> London, about 57 miles from  
Northampton<sup>12</sup> as I go in bondage for  
<sup>13</sup> for a time<sup>14</sup> to whom it belongs ; MS. on  
wham þat hit ys on ylong

## ALISON

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 147-8. Translation in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 308-9.

*An hendy hap Ichabbe yhent<sup>1</sup> ;  
 Ichot<sup>2</sup> from hevene it is me sent ;  
 From alle wymmen mi love is lent,<sup>3</sup>  
 And lyht<sup>4</sup> on Alysoun.*

- 5 Bytuene Mersh and Averil,  
 When spray biginneþ to springe,  
 þe lutel foul hap hire wyl  
 On hyre lud<sup>5</sup> to synge.  
 Ich libbe in love-longinge  
 10 For semlokest<sup>6</sup> of alle þinge ;  
 He<sup>7</sup> may me blisse bringe —  
 Icham in hire baundoun.<sup>8</sup>
- On<sup>9</sup> heu hire her<sup>10</sup> is fayr ynoh,  
 Hire browe broune, hire ege blake ;  
 15 Wiþ lossum chere<sup>11</sup> he on me loh<sup>12</sup> ;  
 Wiþ middel<sup>13</sup> smal and wel ymake.<sup>14</sup>  
 Bote<sup>15</sup> he me wolle to hire take,  
 For te buen<sup>16</sup> hire owen make,<sup>17</sup>  
 Longe to lyven Ichulle<sup>18</sup> forsake,  
 20 And feye<sup>19</sup> fallen adoun.
- Nihtes when Y wende<sup>20</sup> and wake,  
 Forþi<sup>21</sup> myn wonges<sup>22</sup> waxeþ won ;  
 Levedi, al for þine sake  
 Longinge is ylent me on.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have won a fair fate

<sup>2</sup> I know

<sup>3</sup> turned

<sup>4</sup> has lighted

<sup>5</sup> language

<sup>6</sup> comeliest, goodliest

<sup>7</sup> she

<sup>8</sup> power

<sup>9</sup> in

<sup>10</sup> hair

<sup>11</sup> loving mien

<sup>12</sup> laughed

<sup>13</sup> waist

<sup>14</sup> made

<sup>15</sup> unless

<sup>16</sup> be

<sup>17</sup> mate

<sup>18</sup> I shall

<sup>19</sup> death-stricken

<sup>20</sup> wander

<sup>21</sup> on this account

<sup>22</sup> cheeks

<sup>23</sup> appointed to me

In world nis non so wyter<sup>1</sup> mon  
 þat al hire bounte telle con.  
 Hire swyre<sup>2</sup> is whittore þen þe swon,  
 And feyrest may<sup>3</sup> in toune.

Icham for wowyng<sup>4</sup> al forwake,<sup>5</sup> 5  
 Wery so<sup>6</sup> water in wore.<sup>7</sup>  
 Lest eny reve<sup>8</sup> me my make,  
 Ychabbe ygerned<sup>9</sup> gore.<sup>10</sup>  
 Betere is polien whyle sore<sup>11</sup>  
 þen mournen evermore. 10  
 Geynest<sup>12</sup> under gore,<sup>13</sup>  
 Herkne to my roun.<sup>14</sup>

## CHAUCER, BIRD-SONG

Roundel, from the *Parliament of Birds* (about 1382?)

*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,*  
*That hast this wintres weders<sup>15</sup> overshake,<sup>16</sup>*  
*And driven away the longe nightes blake!* 15

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy onlofte,<sup>17</sup>  
 Thus singen smale foules for thy sake :  
*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,*  
*That hast this wintres weders overshake.*

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte, 20  
 Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make ;  
 Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake :  
*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,*  
*That hast this wintres weders overshake,*  
*And driven away the longe nightes blake!* 25

1 wise  
 2 neck  
 3 maid  
 4 yearning  
 5 overwatched  
 6 as

7 weir (?)  
 8 rob  
 9 yearned  
 10 long  
 11 to suffer sorely for a time  
 12 loveliest

13 in body (*lit.* under gore, i.e.  
 under garment)  
 14 lay, song  
 15 storms  
 16 dispelled  
 17 aloft

## BLOW, NORTHERN WIND

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 168-71

*Blow, northerne wynd,  
Send<sup>1</sup> þou me my suetyng!  
Blow, norþerne wynd,  
Blou! blou! blou!*

5 Ichot<sup>2</sup> a burde<sup>3</sup> in boure bryht,  
þat fully semly is on syht,<sup>4</sup>  
Mensksful<sup>5</sup> maiden of myht,  
Feir ant fre<sup>6</sup> to fonde<sup>7</sup>;  
In al þis wurhliche won,<sup>8</sup>  
10 A burde of blod and of bon  
Never ȝete Y nuste<sup>9</sup> non  
Lussomore<sup>10</sup> in londe.

Wip lokkes lefliche<sup>11</sup> and longe,  
Wip frount<sup>12</sup> and face feir to fonde,  
15 Wip murpes monie mote heo monge,<sup>13</sup>  
þat brid<sup>14</sup> so breme<sup>15</sup> in boure;  
Wip lossom eye, grete ant gode,  
Wip browen blysfol under hode<sup>16</sup>;  
He þat reste him on þe rode<sup>17</sup>  
20 þat leflich lyf honoure!

<sup>1</sup> MS. sent<sup>2</sup> I know<sup>3</sup> lady<sup>4</sup> to behold<sup>5</sup> worshipful<sup>6</sup> charming<sup>7</sup> test, make proof of<sup>8</sup> noble dwelling (the world?)<sup>9</sup> knew<sup>10</sup> more enchanting<sup>11</sup> lovely<sup>12</sup> forehead<sup>13</sup> bargain, traffic (?)<sup>14</sup> maiden<sup>15</sup> blithe, gay<sup>16</sup> hood<sup>17</sup> Christ

1-4: refrain to each stanza.

14. fonde: assonance, not rhyme.

Hire lure <sup>1</sup> lumes <sup>2</sup> liht  
 Ase a launterne a <sup>3</sup> nyht,  
 Hire bleo <sup>4</sup> blykyeþ <sup>5</sup> so bryht ;  
     So feyr heo is ant fyn !  
 A suetly <sup>6</sup> suyre <sup>7</sup> heo haþ to holde, 5  
 Wiþ armes, shuldre, ase mon wolde,  
 Ant fyngres feyre forte folde <sup>8</sup> ;  
     God wolde hue were myn ! .

Middel heo haþ menskful <sup>9</sup> smal ;  
 Hire loveliche chere <sup>10</sup> as cristal ; 10  
 Þeges, <sup>11</sup> legges, fet, ant al,  
     Ywraht <sup>12</sup> is <sup>13</sup> of þe beste.  
 A lussum ledy lasteles <sup>14</sup>  
 Þat sweting is, and ever wes ;  
 A betere burde never nes 15  
     Yheried <sup>15</sup> wiþ þe heste. <sup>16</sup>

Heo is dereworþe <sup>17</sup> in day,  
 Graciouse, stout, <sup>18</sup> and gay,  
 Gentil, jolyf <sup>19</sup> so <sup>20</sup> þe jay,  
     Worhliche <sup>21</sup> when heo wakeþ. 20  
 Maiden murgest <sup>22</sup> of mouþ ;  
 Bi est, bi west, by norþ and souþ,  
 Þer nis fi[þ]ele <sup>23</sup> ne crouþ <sup>24</sup>  
     Þat <sup>25</sup> such murþes makeþ.

1 face  
 2 shines  
 3 at  
 4 hue  
 5 gleams  
 6 sweet  
 7 neck  
 8 clasp  
 9 delightfully

10 countenance  
 11 thighs  
 12 fashioned  
 13 MS. wes  
 14 faultless, perfect  
 15 praised  
 16 highest  
 17 precious

18 stately  
 19 lively  
 20 as  
 21 noble  
 22 merriest  
 23 fiddle ; em. B.  
 24 crowd, rote  
 25 MS. sat (em. B.)

Heo is coral of godnesse,  
 Heo is rubie of ryhtfulnesse,<sup>1</sup>  
 Heo is cristal of clannesse,<sup>2</sup>

Ant baner of bealte<sup>3</sup>;

5 Heo is lillie of largesse,<sup>4</sup>  
 Heo is paruenke<sup>5</sup> of prouesse,  
 Heo is selsecle<sup>6</sup> of suetnesse,  
 Ant ledy of lealte.<sup>7</sup> . . .

For hire love Y carke ant care,  
 10 For hire love Y droupne<sup>8</sup> ant dare,<sup>9</sup>  
 For hire love my blisse is bare,  
 Ant al Ich waxe won<sup>10</sup>;  
 For hire love in slep Y slake,<sup>11</sup>  
 For hire love al nyht Ich wake,  
 15 For hire love mournyng Y make  
 More þen eny mon.

### LONGING

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 149-50

Wiþ longyng Y am lad,<sup>12</sup>

On molde<sup>13</sup> Y waxe mad,

A maide marreþ me;

20 Y grede,<sup>14</sup> Y grone, unglad,  
 For selden Y am sad<sup>15</sup>

þat semly forte se.

Levedi, þou rewe me!

To roupe<sup>16</sup> þou havest me rad<sup>17</sup>;

25 Be bote<sup>18</sup> of þat Y bad,<sup>19</sup>

My lyf is long<sup>20</sup> on þe.

<sup>1</sup> righteousness

<sup>2</sup> purity

<sup>3</sup> beauty

<sup>4</sup> generosity

<sup>5</sup> periwinkle

<sup>6</sup> heliotrope

<sup>7</sup> loyalty

<sup>8</sup> droop

<sup>9</sup> falter

<sup>10</sup> turn pale

<sup>11</sup> grow weak

<sup>12</sup> led

<sup>13</sup> earth

<sup>14</sup> cry

<sup>15</sup> satiated

<sup>16</sup> sorrow

<sup>17</sup> guided, brought

<sup>18</sup> recompense

<sup>19</sup> (have) endured

<sup>20</sup> depends



Levedy of alle londe,  
 Les<sup>1</sup> me out of bonde ;  
 Broht Ich am in wo ;  
 Have resting<sup>2</sup> on honde,  
 And send<sup>3</sup> pou me þi sonde<sup>4</sup> 5  
 Sone, er pou me slo<sup>5</sup> —  
 My reste is wiþ þe ro.<sup>6</sup>  
 Þah men to me han onde,<sup>7</sup>  
 To love nul y noht wonde,<sup>8</sup>  
 Ne lete<sup>9</sup> for non of þo.<sup>10</sup> 10

Levedi, wiþ al my miht,  
 My love is on þe liht,<sup>11</sup>  
 To menske<sup>12</sup> þe when Y may ;  
 Þou rew and red<sup>13</sup> me ryht ;  
 To deþe pou havest me diht,<sup>14</sup> 15  
 Y deþe longe er my day ;  
 Þou leve<sup>15</sup> upon mi lay.  
 Treuþe Ichave þe plyht,  
 To don þat Ich have hyht<sup>16</sup>  
 Whil mi lif leste may. 20

Lylie-whyte hue<sup>17</sup> is,  
 Hire rode<sup>18</sup> so rose on rys<sup>19</sup> ;  
 þat reveþ<sup>20</sup> me mi rest.  
 Wymmon war<sup>21</sup> and wys,  
 Of prude<sup>22</sup> hue bereþ þe pris, 25  
 Burde on of þe best.  
 Þis wommon woneþ by west,

<sup>1</sup> loose<sup>2</sup> relief, assuagement<sup>3</sup> MS. sent<sup>4</sup> message<sup>5</sup> slay<sup>6</sup> roe (a type of restlessness ;cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 4. 69 ff.)<sup>7</sup> jealousy<sup>8</sup> will I not cease<sup>9</sup> leave off<sup>10</sup> them<sup>11</sup> alighted<sup>12</sup> honor<sup>13</sup> guide<sup>14</sup> appointed<sup>15</sup> believe (imp.)<sup>16</sup> promised<sup>17</sup> she<sup>18</sup> complexion<sup>19</sup> spray<sup>20</sup> deprives<sup>21</sup> prudent<sup>22</sup> splendor

Brihtest under bys<sup>1</sup>;  
 Hevene Y tolde<sup>2</sup> al his  
 þat o<sup>3</sup> nyht were hire gest.<sup>4</sup>

## NOW WOULD I FAIN

About 1445. Our text is on the basis of MS. Camb. Univ. Lib. Ff. 1.6, 'written about the time of Hen. VI,' with emendations from MS. Bodl. Ashm. 191, but with spellings conformed to the Cambridge manuscript. The latter is reproduced from Halliwell's print in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 1. 25; Ashmole 191 is printed in Stainer and Nicholson, *Early Bodleian Music* 2. 66 (facsimile in Vol. 1, Pl. XXX).

- 5 Now wold I fayne some myrthis make  
 All oneli for my ladys sake,  
 When I hir se<sup>5</sup>;  
 But now I am so ferre from hir,  
 Hit will nat be.
- 10 Thogh I be long out of hir<sup>6</sup> sight,  
 I am hir<sup>6</sup> man both day and night,  
 And so will be;  
 Wherfor wold God as I love hir  
 That she lovid me!
- 15 When she is mery, then am I glad;  
 When she is sory, then<sup>7</sup> am I sad;  
 And cause whi—  
 For he livith nat that lovith hir  
 So<sup>8</sup> well as I.
- 20 She sayth that she hath seen hit wreten  
 That 'seldyn seen is soon foryeten<sup>9</sup>';  
 Hit is nat so;  
 For, in good feith, save oneli hir,  
 I love no moo.

<sup>1</sup> byssus, fine linen<sup>2</sup> should consider<sup>3</sup> one<sup>4</sup> guest<sup>5</sup> MS. and hit wold be (Ashm.)<sup>6</sup> MS. your (Ashm.)<sup>7</sup> MS. than<sup>8</sup> MS. as (Ashm.)<sup>9</sup> forgot 425 23

Wherfor I pray, both night and day,  
 That she may cast [all] <sup>1</sup> care away,  
 And leve <sup>2</sup> in rest;  
 And evermore, wherever <sup>8</sup> she be,  
 To love me <sup>4</sup> best;

5

And I to hir for to be trew,  
 And never chaung[e] her for no <sup>6</sup> new  
 Unto myne end;  
 And that I may in hir servise  
 For evyr amend.<sup>6</sup>

10

## CHAUCER, MERCILESS BEAUTY

The first of a sequence of three roundels. From MS. Camb. Magd. Coll. Pepys 2006. See Skeat, *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* 1.80-1, 387; Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 436-7.

*Youre yën two <sup>7</sup> woole sle me sodenly,  
 I may the Beaute of them not sustene,  
 So wondeth <sup>8</sup> it thorowout my herte kene.*

And but your word wille helen hastily  
 Mi hertis wound[e],<sup>9</sup> while that it is grene,  
*Youre yën two wolle sle me sodenly,  
 I may the Beaute of them not sustene.*

15

Upon my trouth I sey yow feithfully  
 That ye ben of my liffe and deth the quene;  
 For with my deth the trouth shal be [y]sene.<sup>10</sup>  
*Youre yën two wolle sle me sodenly,  
 I may the Beaute of them not sustene,  
 So wondeth it thorowout my herte kene.*

20

1 (Ashm.)

2 live

8 MS. whersoever (Ashm.)

4 MS. hir (Ashm.)

5 MS. noon (Ashm.)

6 improve

7 MS. two yen (em. S.)

8 wounds

9 em. S.

10 Morris (*Aldine Chaucer*),

isene

## DEBATE OF THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 172-3. Cf. below, p. 476

- ' My dep<sup>1</sup> Y love, my lyf Ich hate,  
 For a levedy shene<sup>1</sup>;  
 Heo is briht<sup>2</sup> so<sup>8</sup> daies liht,  
 þat is on me wel sene.  
 5 Al Y falewe<sup>4</sup> so doþ þe lef,  
 In somer when hit is grene;  
 3ef<sup>6</sup> mi þoht<sup>6</sup> helpeþ me noht,  
 To wham shal Y me mene<sup>7</sup>?
- Sorewe and syke<sup>9</sup> and drery mod<sup>9</sup>  
 10 Byndeþ me so faste  
 þat Y wene to walke wod,<sup>10</sup>  
 3ef hit me lengore laste;  
 My serewe, my care, al wiþ a word  
 He<sup>11</sup> myhte away caste;  
 15 Whet helpeþ þe, my suete lemmon,  
 My lyf þus forte gaste<sup>12</sup>?
- ' Do wey, þou clerc, þou art a fol,  
 Wiþ þe bydde<sup>18</sup> Y noht chyde;  
 Shalt þou never lyve þat day  
 20 Mi love þat þou shalt byde.<sup>14</sup>  
 3ef þou in my boure art take,  
 Shame þe may bityde;  
 þe is bettere on fote gon  
 þen wycked hors to ryde.'

<sup>1</sup> fair<sup>2</sup> MS. brith (em. B.)<sup>8</sup> as<sup>4</sup> wither, fade<sup>6</sup> if<sup>6</sup> pondering<sup>7</sup> bemoan myself<sup>8</sup> sighing<sup>9</sup> temper, state of mind<sup>10</sup> insane<sup>11</sup> she<sup>12</sup> ruin<sup>18</sup> must<sup>14</sup> experience

' Weylawei ! whi seist þou so ?  
 þou rewe on me, þy man ;  
 þou art ever in my poht  
 In londe wher Ich am.  
 3ef Y deȝe for þi love, 5  
 Hit is þe mykel sham ;  
 þou lete me lyve, and be þi luef,  
 And þou my suete lemman.'

' Be stille, þou fol — Y calle þe riht<sup>1</sup> !  
 Co[n]st þou never blynne<sup>2</sup> ? 10  
 þou art wayted<sup>3</sup> day and nyht  
 Wiþ<sup>4</sup> fader and al my kynne ;  
 Be þou in mi bour ytake,  
 Lete þey<sup>5</sup> for no synne<sup>6</sup>  
 Me to holde, and þe to slou<sup>7</sup> ; 15  
 þe deþ so þou maht<sup>8</sup> wynne !'

' Sute lady, þou wend<sup>9</sup> þi mod ;  
 Sorewe þou wolt me kype<sup>10</sup> ;  
 Ich am al so<sup>11</sup> sory<sup>12</sup> mon,  
 So Ich was whylen<sup>13</sup> blyþe — 20  
 In a wyndou þer<sup>14</sup> we stod,  
 We custe us<sup>15</sup> fyfty syþe.<sup>16</sup>  
 Feir biheste<sup>17</sup> makeþ mony mon  
 Al is<sup>18</sup> serewes mythe.<sup>19</sup>'

' Weylawey ! whi seist þou so ? 25  
 Mi serewe þou makest newe ;  
 Y lovede a clerk al paramours<sup>20</sup> —  
 Of love he wes ful trewe ;

<sup>1</sup> MS. riȝt (em. B.)

<sup>2</sup> stop

<sup>3</sup> watched, spied upon

<sup>4</sup> by

<sup>5</sup> they will fail not

<sup>6</sup> because of any sin involved

<sup>7</sup> slay

<sup>8</sup> mayst

<sup>9</sup> change

<sup>10</sup> show, inflict upon

<sup>11</sup> just as

<sup>12</sup> unhappy

<sup>13</sup> formerly

<sup>14</sup> where

<sup>15</sup> kissed each other

<sup>16</sup> times

<sup>17</sup> promise

<sup>18</sup> his

<sup>19</sup> lose

<sup>20</sup> passionately

He nes nout blyþe never a day  
 Bote <sup>1</sup> he me sone <sup>2</sup> seze <sup>8</sup>;  
 Ich lovede him betere þen my lyf—  
 Whet bote <sup>4</sup> is hit to leze <sup>5</sup>?’

5           ‘Whil Y wes a clerç in scole,  
             Wel muchel Y coupe <sup>6</sup> of lore <sup>7</sup>;  
 Ych have poled <sup>8</sup> for þy love  
             Woundes fele <sup>9</sup> sore,  
 Fer from [hom], <sup>10</sup> and eke from men,  
 10          Under þe wode hore <sup>11</sup>;  
 Suede ledy, þou rewe of me,  
             Nou may <sup>12</sup> Y no more.’

            ‘þou semest wel to ben a clerç,  
             For þou spekest so stille <sup>13</sup>;  
 15          Shalt þou never for mi love  
             Woundes þole grylle <sup>14</sup>;  
 Fader, moder, and al my kun  
             Ne shal me holde so stille  
 þat Y nam <sup>16</sup> þyn, and þou art myn,  
 20          To don al þi wille.’

## CHAUCER, BALLADE

From the *Legend of Good Women*, Prologue B, lines 249–69

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte <sup>16</sup> tresses clere;  
 Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al adoun;  
 Hyd, Jonathas, <sup>17</sup> al thy frendly manere;  
 Penelopee, and Marcia <sup>18</sup> Catoun,  
 25          Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;

<sup>1</sup> unless<sup>2</sup> soon<sup>8</sup> saw<sup>4</sup> good<sup>5</sup> lie<sup>6</sup> knew<sup>7</sup> learning<sup>8</sup> suffered<sup>9</sup> very<sup>10</sup> em. Wright (*Spec. Lyr. Poetry*, p. 91)<sup>11</sup> hoary; MS. gore<sup>12</sup> can<sup>13</sup> gently<sup>14</sup> cruel<sup>15</sup> am not<sup>16</sup> golden<sup>17</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. 19.2<sup>18</sup> daughter of Cato of Utica

Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,  
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.<sup>1</sup>

Thy faire body, lat hit nat appere,  
Lavyne<sup>2</sup>; and thou, Lucesse of Rome toun,  
And Polixene,<sup>3</sup> that boghten love so dere, 5  
And Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,  
Hyde ye your trouthe of love and your renoun;  
And thou, Tisbe,<sup>4</sup> that hast of love swich peyne;  
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Herro,<sup>5</sup> Dido, Laudomia,<sup>6</sup> alle yfere,<sup>7</sup> 10  
And Phyllis,<sup>8</sup> hanging for thy Demophoun,  
And Canace,<sup>9</sup> espyed by thy chere,<sup>10</sup>  
Ysiphile,<sup>11</sup> betraysed with<sup>12</sup> Jasoun,  
Maketh of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun;  
Nor Ypermistre<sup>13</sup> or Adriane,<sup>14</sup> ye tweyne; 15  
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

### MINOT, EDWARD THE THIRD'S FIRST INVASION OF FRANCE

Laurence Minot (fl. 1333-1352) is a writer of whom virtually nothing is known except that he produced a series of eleven poems, of which this is No. 4. Herford has thus characterized him (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 38. 47): 'While Minot has no great literary value, and gives almost no new information, he embodies in a most vivid way the militant England of his day. He has but one subject, the triumph of England and the English king over French and Scots. The class-divisions among Englishmen are for him wholly merged in the unity of England; himself probably of Norman origin, his habitual language is the strongest and homeliest Saxon. His verse is throughout inspired by savage triumph in the national successes. He has no elegiac or tender note.' Cf. Hall's edition, pp. xii-xiii; Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 322-4.

<sup>1</sup> overshadow, eclipse

<sup>2</sup> Lavinia; cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 6. 764 ff., etc.

<sup>3</sup> daughter of Priam; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 13. 439 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Thisbe; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 4. 55-166

<sup>5</sup> Hero; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 18, 19

<sup>6</sup> Laodamia; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 13  
<sup>7</sup> together

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 2

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 11

<sup>10</sup> countenance

<sup>11</sup> Hypsipyle, first wife of Jason;

see her legend in Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*  
<sup>12</sup> betrayed by

<sup>13</sup> Hypermnestra; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 14

<sup>14</sup> Ariadne; see Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*

Our poem celebrates the fact that, Edward III and Philip of France having offered each other battle, Edward drew up his troops near La Flamengerie in northern France, on Saturday, Oct. 23, 1339, and waited for Philip to arrive, who, however, retreated from his position, five or six miles away, leaving behind him a thousand horses in a marsh (Hall, p. 54; cf. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* 17. 55).

The poem here printed is from Joseph Hall's edition (Oxford, 1887).

- Edward, oure cumly king,  
 In Braband has his woning,  
     With mani cumly knight;  
 And in þat land, trewly to tell,  
 5      Orðanis he still for to dwell,  
     To <sup>1</sup> time he think to fight.
- Now God, þat es of mightes maste,  
 Grant him grace of þe Haly Gaste  
     His heritage to win!  
 10      And Mari moder, of mercy fre,  
 Save oure king and his menze <sup>2</sup>  
     Fro sorow, and schame, and syn!
- þus in Braband has he bene —  
 Whare he bifore was seldom sene —  
 15      For to prove <sup>3</sup> þaire japes;  
 Now no langer wil he spare,  
 Bot unto Fraunce fast will he fare,  
     To confort him with grapes. <sup>4</sup>
- Furth <sup>5</sup> he ferd into France;  
 God save him for mischance,  
 And all his company!  
 20      þe nobill duc of Braband  
 With him went into þat land,  
     Redy to lif or dy.

<sup>1</sup> until the  
<sup>2</sup> retainers

<sup>3</sup> make trial of  
<sup>4</sup> Cf. Cant. 2. 5

<sup>5</sup> MS. ff.



þan þe riche floure de lice <sup>1</sup>  
 Wan þare ful litill prise <sup>2</sup>; —  
 Fast he <sup>3</sup> fled for ferde.<sup>4</sup>  
 þe right aire <sup>5</sup> of þat cuntere  
 Es cumen, with all his knightes fre, 5  
 To schac him by þe berd.

Sir Philip þe Valayse,<sup>6</sup>  
 Wit his men in þo dayes,  
 To batale had he thocht :  
 He bad his men þam purvay <sup>7</sup> 10  
 Withowten lenger delay ;  
 Bot he ne held it noght.

He broght folk ful grete wone,<sup>8</sup>  
 Ay sevyng oganis one,  
 þat ful wele wapnid were ; 15  
 Bot sone, whe[n] he herd ascry <sup>9</sup>  
 þat King Edward was nere þarby,  
 þan durst he noght cum nere.

In þat morni[n]g fell a myst,  
 And when oure I[n]gliss men it wist, 20  
 It changed all þaire chere ;  
 Oure king unto God made his bone,<sup>10</sup>  
 And God sent him gude confort sone —  
 þe weder wex ful clere.

Oure king and his men held þe felde 25  
 Stalwortly, with spere and schelde,  
 And thocht to win his right,  
 With lordes, and with knightes kene,  
 And oþer doghty men bydene,<sup>11</sup>  
 þat war ful frek <sup>12</sup> to fight. 30

<sup>1</sup> *fleur de lis*<sup>2</sup> glory<sup>3</sup> Philip VI of France<sup>4</sup> fear<sup>5</sup> heir (i.e. Edward)<sup>6</sup> de Valois (the king)<sup>7</sup> make ready<sup>8</sup> plenty<sup>9</sup> report (by spies)<sup>10</sup> prayer<sup>11</sup> together<sup>12</sup> eager

When Sir Philip of France herd tell  
 þat King Edward in feld walld dwell,  
 þan gayned<sup>1</sup> him no gle;  
 He traisted of<sup>2</sup> no better bote,<sup>8</sup>  
 5 Bot both on hors and on fote  
 He hasted him to fle.

It semid he was ferd for strokes  
 When he did fell his grete okes  
 About his pavilyoun;e;  
 10 Abated was þan all his pride,  
 For langer þare durst he nocht bide,  
 His bost was broght all doune.

þe king of Beme<sup>4</sup> had cares colde,  
 þat was ful<sup>6</sup> hardy and bolde  
 15 A stede to amstride.<sup>6</sup>  
 [He and]<sup>7</sup> þe king als<sup>8</sup> of Naverne<sup>9</sup>  
 War fain for ferd<sup>10</sup> in þe ferne<sup>11</sup>  
 þaire heviddes<sup>12</sup> for to hide.

And leves<sup>13</sup> wele — it es no lye —  
 20 þe felde hat<sup>14</sup> Flemangrye<sup>15</sup>  
 þat King Edward was in,  
 With princes þat war stif ande bolde,  
 And dukes þat war doghty tolde,<sup>16</sup>  
 In batayle to bigin.

þe princes þat war riche<sup>17</sup> on raw,<sup>18</sup>  
 25 Gert<sup>19</sup> nakers<sup>20</sup> strike, and trumpes blaw,  
 And made mirth at þaire might;

<sup>1</sup> availed<sup>2</sup> expected<sup>8</sup> resource<sup>4</sup> Bohemia<sup>6</sup> MS. fur (em. Ritson)<sup>6</sup> bestride<sup>7</sup> em. R.<sup>8</sup> also<sup>9</sup> Navarre (father-in-law of Philip)<sup>10</sup> MS. faire feld (em. Hall, with fered for ferd)<sup>11</sup> were glad, for fear, in the fern<sup>12</sup> heads<sup>18</sup> believe (imp.)<sup>14</sup> was called<sup>15</sup> MS. ff-<sup>16</sup> considered<sup>17</sup> splendid<sup>18</sup> row (line of battle?), order<sup>19</sup> caused<sup>20</sup> kettle-drums

Both alblast<sup>1</sup> and many a bow  
 War redy railed<sup>2</sup> opon a row,  
 And ful frek for to fight.

Gladly þai gaf mete and drink,  
 So þat þai suld þe better swink<sup>3</sup> —  
 þe wight<sup>4</sup> men þat þar ware.  
 Sir Philip of Fraunce fled for dout,<sup>5</sup>  
 And hied<sup>6</sup> him hame with all his rout;  
 Coward, God giff him care<sup>7</sup>!

5

For þare þan had þe lely flowre<sup>8</sup>  
 Lorn all halely<sup>9</sup> his honowre,  
 þat sogat<sup>10</sup> fled for ferd;  
 Bot oure King Edward come ful still,  
 When þat he trowed<sup>11</sup> no harm him till,<sup>12</sup>  
 And keped<sup>13</sup> him in þe berde.<sup>14</sup>

10

15

## THE DEATH OF EDWARD III

From a poem (written in 1377) in MS. Brit. Mus. Addit. 22,283. Our extract is from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series) 1. 216-7, and comprises lines 17-80.

Sum tyme an Englis schip we had,  
 Nobel hit was, and heih of tour<sup>15</sup>;  
 Thorw al Christendam hit was drad,<sup>16</sup>  
 And stif wold stonde in uch a stour,<sup>17</sup>  
 And best dorst byde a scharp schour,<sup>18</sup>  
 And other stormes smale and grete;  
 Nou is that schip, that bar the flour,  
 Selden seize<sup>19</sup> and sone forȝete.

20

<sup>1</sup> arblast, crossbow  
<sup>2</sup> set in order  
<sup>3</sup> toil  
<sup>4</sup> stout  
<sup>5</sup> fear  
<sup>6</sup> hastened  
<sup>7</sup> distress

<sup>8</sup> See 423 1  
<sup>9</sup> wholly  
<sup>10</sup> thus  
<sup>11</sup> looked for  
<sup>12</sup> to himself  
<sup>13</sup> seized  
<sup>14</sup> beard

<sup>15</sup> tower  
<sup>16</sup> feared  
<sup>17</sup> every battle  
<sup>18</sup> tempest  
<sup>19</sup> seen

Into that schip ther longeth a roothur,<sup>1</sup>

That steered the schip, and governed hit ;

In al this world nis such anothur,

As me thenketh in my wit.

5 Whil schip and rothur togeder was knit,

Thei dredde nother tempest, druyge,<sup>2</sup> nor wete,

Nou be thei bothe in synder flit,<sup>3</sup>

That selden seige is sone forgete.

Scharpe wawes<sup>4</sup> that schip has sayled,

10 And sayed<sup>5</sup> alle sees<sup>6</sup> at aventur ;

For wynt<sup>7</sup> ne wederes<sup>8</sup> never hit fayled,

Wil<sup>9</sup> the roothur miht enduir.<sup>10</sup>

Thoug the see were roug, or elles dimuuir,<sup>11</sup>

Gode havenes that schip wold geete.<sup>12</sup>

15 Nou is that schip, I am wel suir,<sup>13</sup>

Selde iseye and sone forgete.

This good schip I may remene<sup>14</sup>

To the chivalrye of this londe ;

Sum tyme thei counted nougt a bene<sup>15</sup>

20 Be<sup>16</sup> al Fraunce, Ich understonde.

Thei toke and sloug hem with her wonde<sup>17</sup> —

The power of Fraunce, bothe<sup>18</sup> smale and grete ;

And brougt the kyng hider to byde her bonde<sup>19</sup> ;

And nou riht sone hit is forgete.

25 That schip hadde a ful siker<sup>20</sup> mast,

And a sayl strong and large,

That made the gode schip never agast

To undertake a thinge of charge.<sup>21</sup>

And to that schip ther longed<sup>22</sup> a barge,

<sup>1</sup> rudder

<sup>2</sup> drought

<sup>3</sup> removed asunder

<sup>4</sup> waves

<sup>5</sup> braved

<sup>6</sup> seas

<sup>7</sup> wind

<sup>8</sup> storms

<sup>9</sup> while

<sup>10</sup> endure

<sup>11</sup> calm

<sup>12</sup> attain

<sup>13</sup> sure

<sup>14</sup> compare

<sup>15</sup> bean

<sup>16</sup> by ; MS. beo

<sup>17</sup> rod, sceptre

<sup>18</sup> MS. bethe

<sup>19</sup> fetters

<sup>20</sup> secure

<sup>21</sup> moment

<sup>22</sup> belonged

Of al Fraunce gaf<sup>1</sup> nouȝt a cleete.<sup>2</sup>

To us hit was a siker targe<sup>3</sup>;

And now riht clene hit is forȝete.

The rother was nouthur ok ne elm,

Hit was Edward the Thridde, the noble kنيht; 5

The prince his sone bar up his helm,

That never scoumfited<sup>4</sup> was in fiht.

The kyng him rod and rowed<sup>5</sup> ariht,

The prince dredde nouthur stok nor streete.<sup>6</sup>

Nou of hem we lete ful liht<sup>7</sup>; 10

That selden is seiȝe is sone forȝete.

The swifte barge was Duk Henri,<sup>8</sup>

That noble kنيht and wel assayed;

And in his leggaunce<sup>9</sup> worthily

He abod mony a bitter brayd<sup>10</sup>; 15

Ȝif that his enemys ouȝt outrayed,<sup>11</sup>

To chasteis hem wolde he not lete.<sup>12</sup>

Nou is that lord ful lowe ileyd;

That selde is seiȝe is sone forȝete.

This gode comunis,<sup>13</sup> bi the rode, 20

I likne hem to the schipes mast;

That with heore catel<sup>14</sup> and with heore goode<sup>15</sup>

Mayntened the werre<sup>16</sup> both furst and last.

The wynd that bleuȝ the schip with blast,

Hit was gode preȝeres. I sey hit atrete<sup>17</sup>; 25

Nou is devoutnes out icast,

And mony gode dedes ben clene forȝete. . .

<sup>1</sup> cared

<sup>2</sup> cleat

<sup>3</sup> shield

<sup>4</sup> discomfited

<sup>5</sup> rode and rowed

<sup>6</sup> street (for rhyme, instead  
of 'stok nor ston')

<sup>7</sup> make little account

<sup>8</sup> Henry of Lancaster (d. 1361)

<sup>9</sup> allegiance

<sup>10</sup> stroke

<sup>11</sup> inflicted any injuries

<sup>12</sup> refrain

<sup>13</sup> commons

<sup>14</sup> property

<sup>15</sup> goods

<sup>16</sup> war

<sup>17</sup> distinctly

## CHAUCER, COMPLAINT TO HIS EMPTY PURSE

- To you, my purse, and to non other wight <sup>1</sup>  
 Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere ;  
 I am so sory, now that ye be light,  
 That certes, but <sup>2</sup> ye make me hevy chere,  
 5 Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere ;  
 For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye :  
 Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot <sup>3</sup> I dye !
- Now voucheth sauf <sup>4</sup> this day, or <sup>5</sup> hit be night,  
 That I of you the blisful soun <sup>6</sup> may here,  
 10 Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,  
 That of yelownesse <sup>7</sup> hadde never pere.<sup>8</sup>  
 Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,<sup>9</sup>  
 Quene of comfort and of good companye.  
 Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye !
- 15 Now purs, that be <sup>10</sup> to me my lyves <sup>11</sup> light,  
 And saveour,<sup>12</sup> as down in this worlde here,  
 Out of this tounne help me through your might,  
 Sin <sup>13</sup> that ye wole nat been my tresorere ;  
 For I am shave <sup>14</sup> as nye <sup>15</sup> as any frere.  
 20 But yit I pray unto your curtesye,  
 Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye !

<sup>1</sup> creature  
<sup>2</sup> unless  
<sup>3</sup> must  
<sup>4</sup> vouchsafe  
<sup>5</sup> ere

<sup>6</sup> sound  
<sup>7</sup> referring to gold  
<sup>8</sup> equal  
<sup>9</sup> guide  
<sup>10</sup> are

<sup>11</sup> life's  
<sup>12</sup> saviour  
<sup>13</sup> since  
<sup>14</sup> shaved  
<sup>15</sup> close

## I HAVE A GENTLE COCK

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Pickering, London, 1836). See 199 *ss* ff.

I have a gentil cok <sup>1</sup>  
 Crowyt[h] me day <sup>2</sup>;  
 He doth <sup>3</sup> me rysyn erly,  
 My matynis for to say.

I have a gentil cok <sup>1</sup>;  
 Comyn he is of gret <sup>4</sup>;  
 His comb is of reed corel,  
 His tayl <sup>5</sup> is of get.<sup>6</sup> 5

I have a gentil cok <sup>1</sup>;  
 Comyn he is of kynde <sup>7</sup>;  
 His comb is of reed corel,<sup>8</sup>  
 His tayl is of inde.<sup>9</sup> 10

His leggs ben of asour,  
 So gentil and so smale;  
 His spors arn of sylver quyt <sup>10</sup>  
 Into the wortewale.<sup>11</sup> 15

His eynyn arn of cristal,  
 Lokyn <sup>12</sup> al in aumbyr;  
 And every nygt he perchit[h] hym  
 In myn ladyis chaumbyr. 20

<sup>1</sup> MS. cook

<sup>2</sup> announces day to me by his  
 crowing

<sup>3</sup> makes

<sup>4</sup> great (lineage)

<sup>5</sup> MS. tayil

<sup>6</sup> jet

<sup>7</sup> he is true to his breed

<sup>8</sup> MS. scorel

<sup>9</sup> indigo

<sup>10</sup> white

<sup>11</sup> quick (*lit.* root)

<sup>12</sup> enclosed

## BACHELOR'S SONG

About 1460-1490. From MS. Bodl. Eng. Poet. e. 1, printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Percy Soc. 23), p. 27.

*A, a, a, o,<sup>1</sup>  
Yet I love wherso I go.*

In all this warld [n]is a meryar life  
Than is a zong man withoutyn a wyfe;  
5 For he may lyven withouhten stryfe,  
In every place wherso he go.

In every place he is loved over all  
Among maydyns gret and small,  
In dauncing, in pyping, and rennyng at the ball,  
10 In every place wherso he go.

Thei lat lygt<sup>2</sup> be husbondmen,<sup>3</sup>  
Whan thei at the balle ren<sup>4</sup>;  
They cast hyr love to zong[e] men  
In every place wherso he go.

15 Than sey maydens: 'Farwell, Jack<sup>5</sup>!  
Thi love is pressyd al in thi pa[c]k<sup>6</sup>;  
Thou beryst thi love behynd thi back,'  
In every place wherso he go.

<sup>1</sup> MS. a  
<sup>2</sup> easily

<sup>3</sup> married men  
<sup>4</sup> MS. rene

<sup>5</sup> MS. Jacke  
<sup>6</sup> MS. pake



## CHAUCER, TRUTH

Fle fro the pres,<sup>1</sup> and dwelle with sothfastnesse<sup>2</sup>;  
 Suffise<sup>3</sup> thin owene thing, thogh it be smal;  
 For hord<sup>4</sup> hath hate, and clymyng tykelnesse,<sup>5</sup>  
 Prees<sup>6</sup> hath envye, and wele<sup>7</sup> blent<sup>8</sup> overal<sup>9</sup>;  
 Savoure<sup>10</sup> no more thanne the byhove<sup>11</sup> shal;  
 Reule weel thiself, that other folk canst reede,<sup>12</sup>  
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.<sup>13</sup>

Tempest<sup>14</sup> the<sup>15</sup> noght al croked to redresse,  
 In trust of hire<sup>16</sup> that turneth as a bal;  
 Greet reste stant in litel besynesse,<sup>17</sup>  
 Bywar therfore to spurne agayn an al<sup>18</sup>;  
 Stryve not as doth the crokke<sup>19</sup> with the wal.  
 Daunte<sup>20</sup> thiself, that dauntest otheres dede,  
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.

That the is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,<sup>21</sup>  
 The wrastlyng for<sup>22</sup> this worlde axeth<sup>23</sup> a fal;  
 Her is non hom,<sup>24</sup> her nys but wyldernesse.  
 Forth, pylgrym, forth! Forth, beste, out of thi stal!  
 Know thi contre, loke up, thank God of al!  
 Hold the hye weye, and lat thi gost<sup>25</sup> the lede,  
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.

1 crowd

2 truth

3 subj.

4 hoarding

5 instability

6 the throng of courtiers

7 prosperity

8 blinds

9 everywhere

10 relish, care for

11 suit, fit

12 direct

13 there is no fear

14 torment

15 thyself

16 Fortune

17 fuss, worry (cf. Isa. 30. 15)

18 awl (cf. Acts 9. 5)

19 crock, earthen pot

20 conquer

21 submission

22 to obtain

23 calls for, invites

24 Cf. Heb. 11. 9, 10; 13. 14

25 spirit

## UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?

About 1275. From MS. Bodl. Digby 86, as printed by Furnivall, *Minor Poems of the Vernon MS., Part II* (E.E.T.S. 117), pp. 761 ff. (ten stanzas in all); cf. the somewhat different version in Bøddeker, *Altengl. Dicht.*, pp. 229-30, which has suggested two or three emendations.

The keynote is struck by Boethius (Book 2, Metre 7):

Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent,  
Quid Brutus aut rigidus Cato?

These lines are expanded in translation by King Alfred: 'Where now are the bones of the famous and wise goldsmith, Weland?' etc. One of the most famous variations on the theme is by Villon (1461), the first of whose stanzas runs:

Dictes moy où, n'en quel pays,  
Est Flora, la belle Rommaine;  
Archipiada, ne Thaïs,  
Qui fut sa cousine germaine;  
Echo, parlant quant bruyt on maine  
Dessus riviére ou sus estan,  
Qui beaulté ot trop plus qu'humaine?  
— Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

This is translated by Payne as follows:

Tell me, where, in what land of shade,  
Hides fair Flora of Rome? and where  
Are Thaïs and Archiapade,  
Cousins german in beauty rare?  
And Echo, more than mortal fair,  
That when one calls by river flow,  
Or marish, answers out of the air?  
— But what has become of last year's snow?

The last four lines are thus translated in Rossetti's version:

Where is Echo, beheld of no man,  
Only heard on river and mere,  
She whose beauty was more than human?  
— But where are the snows of yester-year?

See also below, p. 434; Wells, *Manual*, p. 824 (30).

Were beþ pey [þat]<sup>1</sup> biforen us weren,  
Houndes ladden and havekes beren,  
And hadden feld and wode?

<sup>1</sup> Cf. B.

þe riche levedies in hoere bour,  
 þat wereden gold in hoere tressour,<sup>1</sup>  
 Wiþ hoere brigtte rode<sup>2</sup>?

[þey]<sup>3</sup> eten and drounken, and maden hem glad;  
 Hoere lif was al wiþ gamen ilad<sup>4</sup>; 5  
 Men kneleden<sup>5</sup> hem biforen;  
 þey beren hem wel swiþe heye<sup>6</sup>;  
 And, in a twinkling of an eye,  
 Hoere soules weren forloren.

Were is þat lawing<sup>7</sup> and that song, 10  
 þat trayling and that proude zong,<sup>8</sup>  
 þo havekes and þo houndes?  
 Al þat joye is went away,  
 þat wele is comen to 'Weylaway!' —  
 To manie harde stoundes.<sup>9</sup> 15

Hoere paradis þey<sup>10</sup> nomen<sup>11</sup> here,  
 And nou þey lien in helle ifere<sup>12</sup>;  
 þe fuir hit brennes hevere.  
 Long is ay,<sup>13</sup> and long is o,<sup>14</sup>  
 Long is wy,<sup>15</sup> and long is wo<sup>16</sup>; 20  
 þennes ne comeþ þey nevere.

## THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE-SONG

Thomas of Hales was a Franciscan friar, who wrote this 'luve-ron' of 210 lines at the request of a young nun, in the reign of Henry III (probably before 1240, according to *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 258; soon after 1244, according to Morris, *Old Eng. Misc.*, p. xi; about 1272, *N. E. D.*). The extract below is from the MS. of Jesus College, Oxford (lines 65-120), as reproduced in *Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S. 49), pp. 93-9. A translation of thirteen stanzas,

<sup>1</sup> braids, tresses<sup>2</sup> complexion<sup>3</sup> Cf. B.<sup>4</sup> led<sup>5</sup> MS. keneleden<sup>6</sup> very exceedingly high<sup>7</sup> laughing<sup>8</sup> gait, carriage<sup>9</sup> experiences<sup>10</sup> MS. by<sup>11</sup> took<sup>12</sup> side by side<sup>13</sup> ever<sup>14</sup> always; MS. ho<sup>15</sup> alas<sup>16</sup> woe

including the first five printed here, may be found in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 208-11. He says: 'We have here an art-poetry not quite developed in form, of the simplest, noblest mould, a contemplative lyric, which, springing from warm feeling, moves calmly and quietly, without subtlety of reflection or trifling with forms, in euphonious, richly figurative speech.' Another version is in Miss Weston's *Chief Middle English Poets*, pp. 343-5.

Hwer is Paris and Heleyne,  
 þat weren so bryht and feyre on bleo<sup>1</sup>?  
 Amadas and Ideyne,<sup>2</sup>  
 Tristram, Yseude, and alle peo<sup>3</sup>?  
 5 Ector, wiþ his scharpe meyne,<sup>4</sup>  
 And Cesar, riche of wor[I]des feo<sup>6</sup>?  
 Heo beoþ iglyden ut of þe reyne,  
 So<sup>6</sup> þe schef<sup>7</sup> is of þe cleo.<sup>8</sup>

Hit is of heom al so<sup>9</sup> hit nere.  
 10 Of heom me haveþ<sup>10</sup> wunder itold —  
 Nere hit reupe<sup>11</sup> for to here<sup>12</sup> —  
 Hw hi were wiþ pyne<sup>18</sup> aquold,<sup>14</sup>  
 And hwat hi poleden<sup>15</sup> alyve<sup>16</sup> here;  
 Al is heore hot iturnd to cold.  
 15 þus is þes world of false fere<sup>17</sup>;  
 Fol he is þe on hire is bold.

þeyh he were so riche mon  
 As Henry,<sup>18</sup> ure [noble] kyng,

1 hue  
 2 MS. Dideyne  
 3 those  
 4 power  
 5 wealth  
 6 as

7 sheaf  
 8 brae, steep hillside  
 9 as if  
 10 one has, they have  
 11 were it not pity  
 12 MS. heren

18 pain  
 14 destroyed  
 15 endured  
 16 in life  
 17 appearance, show  
 18 Henry III (1216-1272)

3. **Amadas**: see Schofield, pp. 322, 479. — **Ideyne**: there is a thirteenth-century OF. romance of Breton origin, *Amadas et Idoine* (ed. Hippeau, Paris, 1863), and allusion is made to the story by Gower (*Conf. Am.* 6.879) and the *Cursor Mundi* (v. 20), etc.; cf. Gaston Paris, *Litt. Fr. au Moyen Age*, § 66, and *English Miscellany presented to Dr. Furnivall*, pp. 386 ff. (where there are other references); Schofield, pp. 117, 375.

And al so veyr as Absalon,  
 þat nevede on eorþe non evenyng,<sup>1</sup>  
 Al were sone his prute<sup>2</sup> agon,<sup>3</sup>  
 Hit nere on ende wrþ on heryng.<sup>4</sup>  
 Mayde, if þu wilnest<sup>5</sup> after leofmon,<sup>6</sup> 5  
 Ich teche þe enne<sup>7</sup> treowe King.

A ! swete, if þu ikn[e]owe<sup>8</sup>  
 þe gode þewes<sup>9</sup> of þisse Childe !  
 He is feyr, and bryht on heowe,  
 Of glede chere,<sup>10</sup> of mode mylde, 10  
 Of lufsum lost,<sup>11</sup> of truste treowe,  
 Freo of heorte, of wisdom wilde<sup>12</sup> ;  
 Ne þurfte<sup>13</sup> þe never re[o]we,  
 Myhtestu do<sup>14</sup> þe in his [h]ylde.<sup>15</sup>

He is ricchest Mon of londe, 15  
 So wide so mon speketh wiþ muþ ;  
 Alle heo beoþ to<sup>16</sup> his honde,  
 Est and west, norþ and suþ.  
 Henri, King of Engelonde,  
 Of hym he halt,<sup>17</sup> and to hym buhþ.<sup>18</sup> 20  
 Mayde, to þe he send his sonde,<sup>19</sup>  
 And wilneþ for to beo þe cuþ.

Ne byt<sup>20</sup> he wiþ þe lond ne leode,<sup>21</sup>  
 Vouh,<sup>22</sup> ne gray,<sup>23</sup> ne rencyen.<sup>24</sup>  
 Naveþ he þerto none neode ; 25  
 He is riche and weli<sup>25</sup> man.

<sup>1</sup> peer ; cf. 420 21<sup>2</sup> pride<sup>3</sup> vanished<sup>4</sup> herring<sup>5</sup> longest<sup>6</sup> lover<sup>7</sup> a<sup>8</sup> knew<sup>9</sup> qualities<sup>10</sup> countenance<sup>11</sup> delight<sup>12</sup> (?)<sup>13</sup> thou wouldst need ; MS. þurhte<sup>14</sup> put<sup>15</sup> grace<sup>16</sup> in<sup>17</sup> holds<sup>18</sup> bows<sup>19</sup> message ; MS. schonde<sup>20</sup> asks<sup>21</sup> people<sup>22</sup> particolored fur<sup>23</sup> gray fur<sup>24</sup> a kind of cloth<sup>25</sup> wealthy

If þu him woldest lue beode,<sup>1</sup>  
 And bycumen his leovemon,  
 He brouhte <sup>2</sup> þe to suche wede,<sup>3</sup>  
 þat <sup>4</sup> naveþ king ne kayser non.

5       Hwat <sup>5</sup> spekestu of eny bolde <sup>6</sup>  
       þat wrouhte þe wise Salomon?  
 Of jaspe, of saphir, of merede <sup>7</sup> golde,  
       And of mony onoþer ston?  
 Hit is feyrure of feole volde <sup>8</sup>  
 10       More þan Ich eu telle con,  
       þis bold, mayde, þe is bihote,<sup>9</sup>  
       If þat þu bist his leovemon.

## EARTH UPON EARTH

Of this poem there are three versions (A, B, C). A is represented by two poems, B by twenty, and C by one — not to mention a rather anomalous example, difficult to classify. The earliest texts date from about 1310; that printed here is from 1430–1450 (MS. Lambeth 853), and is No. 10 of B. All the known texts have been printed by Miss Hilda Murray, with the necessary apparatus, in *Erthe upon Erthe* (E.E.T.S. 141). The Stratford-on-Avon version was printed by Longfellow in *Outre-Mer*.

The theme is: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return' (Gen. 3. 19).

Erþe out of erþe is wondirly wrougt,  
 Erþe of erþe haþ gete <sup>10</sup> a dignyte of nougt,  
 15       Erþe upon erþe haþ sett al his þougt,  
       How þat erþe upon erþe may be hiȝ <sup>11</sup> brougt.

Erþe upon erþe wold he be a king;  
 But how erþe schal to erþe þenkiþ he noping;  
 Whanne þat erþe biddiþ erþe hise rentis hom bring,  
 20       þan schal erþe out of erþe have a piteuous parting.

<sup>1</sup> offer  
<sup>2</sup> would bring  
<sup>3</sup> apparel  
<sup>4</sup> as

<sup>5</sup> why  
<sup>6</sup> building  
<sup>7</sup> purified  
<sup>8</sup> many times

<sup>9</sup> promised  
<sup>10</sup> got  
<sup>11</sup> high

Erþe upon erþe wynneþ castels and touris ;  
 þan seiþ erþe to erþe : ' Now is þis al houris .'  
 Whanne erþe upon erþe haþ biggid <sup>1</sup> up hise boures,  
 þanne schal erþe upon erþe suffir scharpe schouris .<sup>2</sup>

Erþe gooth upon erþe as molde upon molde, 5  
 So gooth erþe upon erþe al gliteringe in golde,  
 Like as erþe unto erþe nevere go scholde,<sup>3</sup>  
 And git schal erþe unto erthe raþer <sup>4</sup> þan he wolde.

O þou wrecchid erþe, þat on erþe traveilist <sup>5</sup> nyȝt and day,  
 To florishe <sup>6</sup> þe erþe, to peynte þe erþe with wantowne aray, 10  
 Ȝit schal þou, erþe, for al þi erþe, make þou it nevere so queynte  
 and gay,  
 Out of þis erþe into þe erþe, þere to clinge <sup>7</sup> as a clot <sup>8</sup> of clay.

O wrecchid man, whi art þou proud, þat art of þe erþe makid ?  
 Hider brouȝttist þou no schroud,<sup>9</sup> but poore come þou and nakid. 15  
 Whanne þi soule is went <sup>10</sup> out, and þi bodi in erþe rakid,  
 þan þi bodi þat was rank <sup>11</sup> and undevout, of alle men is bihatid.

Out of þis erþe cam to þis erþe þis wrecchid garnement <sup>12</sup>;  
 To hide þis erþe, to happe <sup>13</sup> þis erþe, to him was cloþinge lente ;  
 Now gooþ erþe upon erþe, ruli <sup>14</sup> raggid and rent, 20  
 þerfore schal erþe undir þe erþe have hidiose turment.

Whi þat erþe to myche loveþ erþe wondir me þink,  
 Or whi þat erþe for superflue erþe to sore sweete <sup>15</sup> wole or swynk <sup>16</sup>;  
 Ffor whanne þat erþe upon erþe is brouȝt withinne þe brink,<sup>17</sup>  
 þan schal erþe of þe erþe have a rewful stynk.<sup>18</sup> 25

<sup>1</sup> built<sup>2</sup> trials<sup>3</sup> MS. schulde<sup>4</sup> sooner<sup>5</sup> laborest<sup>6</sup> adorn<sup>7</sup> dry, shrivel up<sup>8</sup> clod<sup>9</sup> garment<sup>10</sup> gone<sup>11</sup> proud<sup>12</sup> garment (of flesh)<sup>13</sup> cover<sup>14</sup> ruefully<sup>15</sup> sweat<sup>16</sup> toil<sup>17</sup> of the grave<sup>18</sup> MS. swynk

Lo ! erþe upon erþe considere þou may,  
 How erþe comeþ into erþe nakid alway,  
 Whi schulde erþe upon erþe go now so stoute or gay,  
 Whanne erþe schal passe out of erþe in so poore aray ?

5 Wolde God þerfore þis erþe, while þat he is upon this erþe,  
 Upon þis wolde hertili þinke,  
 And how þe erþe out of þe erþe schal have his azenrisyng,<sup>1</sup>  
 And þis erþe for þis erþe schal zeelde<sup>2</sup> streite<sup>3</sup> rekenyng ;  
 Schulde nevere þan þis erþe for þis erþe mysplese hevene King.

10 Þerfore, þou erþe upon erþe, þat so wickidli hast wrought,  
 While þat þou, erþe, art upon erþe, turne azen þi þought,  
 And praie to þat God upon erþe þat al þe erþe haþ wrought,  
 Þat þou, erþe upon erþe, to blis may be brougt.

O þou Lord þat madist þis erþe for þis erþe, and suffridist heere  
 15 peynes ille,  
 Lete nevere þis erþe, for þis erþe, myscheve<sup>4</sup> ne spille,<sup>5</sup>  
 But þat þis erþe on þis erþe be evere worchinge þi wille,  
 So þat þis erþe from þis erþe may stie<sup>6</sup> up to þin hig hille. Amen.

### FILIUS REGIS MORTUUS EST

About 1430. From MS. Lambeth 853, printed by Furnivall in *Political, Religious, and Love Poems* (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15), p. 233. Thirteen stanzas in all.

As resoun rewlid my rechelees<sup>7</sup> mynde,  
 20 Bi wielde<sup>8</sup> waies as Y hadde went,  
 A solempne citee me fortunied to fynde ;  
 To turne þerto was myne entent.  
 A maiden Y mette, a modir hynde,<sup>9</sup>  
 Sobbinge and sigynge, sche was neer schent<sup>10</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> resurrection ; MS. -risynge

<sup>2</sup> yield

<sup>3</sup> strict

<sup>4</sup> come to grief

<sup>5</sup> perish

<sup>6</sup> ascend

<sup>7</sup> reckless ; MS. riche-

<sup>8</sup> wild

<sup>9</sup> gracious

<sup>10</sup> prostrated



Sche wepte, sche wailid, so sore sche pined ;  
 Hir heer, hir face, sche tuggid and rent :  
 Sche tuggid, sche taar with greet turment,  
 Sche racide<sup>1</sup> hir skyn, bothe body and brest ;  
 Sche seide þeise wordis evere as sche went : 5  
*Filius Regis mortuus est.*

' The Kingis Sone,' sche seide, ' is deed,  
 Þe joie, þe substaunce of my liif<sup>2</sup> ;  
 Þe modir to se hir Sone so blede,  
 It kittip<sup>3</sup> myn herte as with a knyf. 10  
 My Sone þat Y was woont to fede,  
 To lulle, to lappe, with songis riif<sup>4</sup> —  
 Out of his herte his blood to schede  
 Makip me, his modir, in myche striif.<sup>5</sup>  
 I am boþe maiden, modir, and wiif, 15  
 Sones<sup>6</sup> have Y no mo to souke my brest ;  
 I may make sorewe without reliif,  
 For *Filius Regis mortuus est.*'

QUÏA AMORE LANGUEO

About 1450-1500. From MS. Camb. Univ. Lib. Hh. 4. 12, printed by Furnivall, *op. cit.*, p. 181. Sixteen stanzas in all. Translation in Weston, *op. cit.*, pp. 349-50.

In the vaile of restles mynd,  
 I sowght in mownteyn and in mede, 20  
 Trustyng a treu lofe for to fynd.  
 Upon an hyll than toke I hede ;  
 A voise I herd — and nere<sup>7</sup> I yede<sup>8</sup> —  
 In gret dolour complaynyng tho :  
 ' See, dere soule, my sydes blede, 25  
*Quia amore langueo.*'

<sup>1</sup> tore  
<sup>2</sup> MS. liife  
<sup>3</sup> cuts

<sup>4</sup> rife  
<sup>5</sup> MS. striife  
<sup>6</sup> MS. and sones

<sup>7</sup> nearer  
<sup>8</sup> approached

Upon thys mownt I fand a tree ;  
 Undir thys tree a man sittynge ;  
 From hede to fote wowndyd was he,  
 Hys hert-blode I saw bledynge ;  
 5 A semely man to be a kyng,  
 A graciose face to loke unto.  
 I askyd hym how he had paynyng,<sup>1</sup>  
 He said : '*Quia amore langueo.*

I am treu love that fals was never :  
 10 My sistur, mannys soule, I loved hyr thus ;  
 Bycause I wold on no wyse dissevere,  
 I left my kyngdome gloriouse ;  
 I purveyd<sup>2</sup> hyr a place full precieuse ;  
 She flytt,<sup>3</sup> I folowyd ; I luffed her soo  
 15 That I suffred thes paynes piteuouse,  
*Quia amore langueo.*'

## HE BARE HIM UP

About 1500 (or earlier). From MS. Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by Flügel in *Anglia* 26. 175-6 (slightly different in his *Neuenglisches Lesebuch* 1. 142), with þ for MS. y. The knight is of course Jesus Christ.

*Lully, lulley, lully,<sup>4</sup> lulley,  
 þe fawcon hath born my make<sup>5</sup> away.*

20 He bare hym up, he bare hym down,  
 He bare hym into an orchard browne.

In þat orchard þere was an halle  
 Þat was hangid with purpill and pall.

And in þat hall þere was a bede<sup>6</sup> ;  
 Hit was hangid with gold so rede.

<sup>1</sup> distress  
<sup>2</sup> provided

<sup>3</sup> fled  
<sup>4</sup> MS. lulley (em. F.)

<sup>5</sup> mate  
<sup>6</sup> bed

And yn þat bed þere lythe a knyght.  
His wowndis bledyng day and nyght.

By þat bedeside kneleth a may,<sup>1</sup>  
And she wepeth both nyght and day.

And by þat beddeside þere stondith a ston,  
'Corpus Christi' wretyn þeron.

5

## THE PEARL

*The Pearl* is an elegiac poem with allegorical elements, embodying a vision by the author of a maiden closely related to him, who had died at an early age. Disregarding stanza 72 (for which see Osgood's edition, p. xlvii, note 1), the poem falls into 20 sections, each consisting of 5 twelve-line stanzas, concatenated by the recurrence of the last word of a stanza in the first line following. The rhyme-scheme is ababababbcbc. The date is about 1370; the author wrote also *Gawain and the Green Knight* (see above, p. 53), besides two other poems, *Purity* and *Patience*. There is only a single manuscript, Brit. Mus. Cott. Nero A. X + 4 (facsimile in Yale University Library). The best edition is by Osgood (Belles Lettres Series, 1906); to this the student is referred for further information. There are translations by Gollancz (1891), Mitchell (1906), Coulton (1906), Osgood (1907), Jewett (1908), and Weston (in *Romance, Vision, and Satire*, 1912); of these the best is Osgood's, in prose.

Tennyson thus apostrophized the poem in Gollancz's edition:

We lost you — for how long a time! —  
True pearl of our poetic prime;  
We found you, and you gleam reset  
In Britain's lyric coronet.

With reference to the emphasis upon the jeweler's art, we know that from the death of St. Louis (1270) this had surpassed all other industrial arts in France (Labarte, *Inventaire du Mobilier de Charles V*, p. 1).

Our text is taken from Osgood's edition (by the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.), with the substitution, when etymologically indicated, of *z* for the character *ȝ*, which usually denotes palatal *g*, of *and* for *ȝ*, and with the normalization of *u* and *v*; the emendations are those of Osgood's text. Our extracts comprise lines 37-300, 385-420.

To þat spot þat I in speche expoun<sup>2</sup>  
I entred, in þat erber<sup>3</sup> grene,

<sup>1</sup> maid<sup>2</sup> tell of<sup>3</sup> lawn

1 In Augoste, in a hyȝ<sup>1</sup> seysoun,  
 Quen corne is corven<sup>2</sup> wyth crokez<sup>3</sup> kene.  
 On huyle<sup>4</sup> per perle hit trendeled<sup>5</sup> doun  
 Schadowed<sup>6</sup> pis wortez<sup>7</sup> ful schyre<sup>8</sup> and schene<sup>9</sup> —  
 5 Gilofre,<sup>10</sup> gyngure,<sup>11</sup> and gromlyoun,<sup>12</sup>  
 And pyonys<sup>13</sup> powdered<sup>14</sup> ay bytwene.  
 Ȝif hit watz semly on to sene,  
 A fayr reflowr<sup>15</sup> ȝet fro hit flot,<sup>16</sup>  
 per wonys<sup>17</sup> þat worþyly,<sup>18</sup> I wot and wene,<sup>19</sup>  
 10 My precious perle wythouten spot.

Bifore þat spot my honde I spenn[e]d,<sup>20</sup>  
 For care ful colde þat to me caȝt<sup>21</sup>;  
 A de[r]vely dele<sup>22</sup> in my hert denned,<sup>23</sup>  
 15 þaȝ resoun sette myselven saȝt.<sup>24</sup>  
 I playned<sup>25</sup> my perle þat per watz spenned<sup>26</sup>  
 Wyth fyrte skyllez<sup>27</sup> þat faste faȝt<sup>28</sup>;  
 þaȝ kynde<sup>29</sup> of Kryst me comfort kenned,<sup>30</sup>  
 My wreched wyll in wo ay wraȝte.<sup>31</sup>  
 I felle upon þat floury flagt,<sup>32</sup>  
 20 Suche odour to my hernez<sup>33</sup> schot;  
 I slode<sup>34</sup> upon a slepyng-slaȝte<sup>35</sup> —  
 On þat prec[i]os perle wythouten spot.

Fro spot<sup>36</sup> my spyryt per sprang in space,  
 My body on balke<sup>4</sup> per bod<sup>37</sup> in sweven<sup>38</sup>;

1 high (in a liturgical sense;  
 probably the Assumption  
 of the Virgin, August 15)

2 mowed

3 sickles

4 mound

5 rolled

6 shaded

7 plants

8 bright

9 fair

10 gillyflower

11 ginger

12 gromwell

13 peonies

14 scattered thickly

15 fragrance

16 flowed

17 dwells

18 worshipful one

19 suppose

20 clasped

21 seized on me

22 sudden sorrow

23 made tumult

24 though reason reconciled  
me

25 bemoaned

26 enclosed

27 frightened reasonings

28 contended

29 the nature

30 imparted

31 wrought

32 turf

33 brain

34 sank

35 visitation of sleep

36 forth

37 remained

38 dream

My goste is gon in Godez grace,  
 In aventure þer <sup>1</sup> mervaylez <sup>2</sup> meven.<sup>3</sup>  
 I ne wyste in þis worlde quere þat hit wace,<sup>4</sup>  
 Bot I knew me keste <sup>5</sup> þer klyfez <sup>6</sup> cleven <sup>7</sup>;  
 Towarde a foreste I bere <sup>8</sup> þe face,  
 Where rych rokkez wer to dyscreven.<sup>9</sup>  
 Þe lygt of hem mygt no mon leven,<sup>10</sup>  
 Þe glemande <sup>11</sup> glory þat of hem glent <sup>12</sup>;  
 For wern never webbez þat wygez weven <sup>13</sup>  
 Of half so dere adub[be]mente.<sup>14</sup>

Dubbed <sup>15</sup> wern alle þo downez sydez <sup>16</sup>  
 Wyth crystal klyffez so cler of kynde.<sup>17</sup>  
 Holte-wodez <sup>18</sup> brygt aboute hem bydez <sup>19</sup>  
 Of bollez <sup>20</sup> as blwe <sup>21</sup> as ble of ynde <sup>22</sup>;  
 As bornyst sylver þe lef onsydez,<sup>23</sup>  
 Þat pike con trylle <sup>24</sup> on uch a tynde <sup>25</sup>  
 Quen <sup>26</sup> glem of glodez <sup>27</sup> agaynz hem glydez;  
 Wyth schymeryng schene <sup>28</sup> ful schrylle <sup>29</sup> þay schynde.  
 Þe gravayl þat on grounde con grynde <sup>30</sup>  
 Wern precious perlez of Oryente;  
 Þe sunnebemez bot blo and blynde <sup>31</sup>  
 In respecte of <sup>32</sup> þat adubbenment.


The adubbenmente of þo downez dere  
 Garten <sup>33</sup> my goste <sup>34</sup> al greffe forgete;  
 So frech flavorez <sup>35</sup> of frytez <sup>36</sup> were  
 As fode hit con me fayre refete.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>1</sup> where  
<sup>2</sup> marvels  
<sup>3</sup> move  
<sup>4</sup> was  
<sup>5</sup> myself to be set down  
<sup>6</sup> cliffs  
<sup>7</sup> stand fast  
<sup>8</sup> turn  
<sup>9</sup> to be descried  
<sup>10</sup> believe  
<sup>11</sup> resplendent  
<sup>12</sup> gleamed  
<sup>13</sup> people weave

<sup>14</sup> splendid array  
<sup>15</sup> arrayed  
<sup>16</sup> hillsides  
<sup>17</sup> by nature  
<sup>18</sup> woods  
<sup>19</sup> are  
<sup>20</sup> trunks of trees  
<sup>21</sup> blue  
<sup>22</sup> indigo color  
<sup>23</sup> unfolds  
<sup>24</sup> did quiver  
<sup>25</sup> on each branch  
<sup>26</sup> when

<sup>27</sup> flashes of light (?)  
<sup>28</sup> beautiful shimmering  
<sup>29</sup> intensely  
<sup>30</sup> did crunch  
<sup>31</sup> are but dark and dim  
<sup>32</sup> compared to  
<sup>33</sup> caused  
<sup>34</sup> soul  
<sup>35</sup> fresh fragrances  
<sup>36</sup> fruits  
<sup>37</sup> satisfy, refresh

Fowlez<sup>1</sup> þer flowen<sup>2</sup> in fryth<sup>3</sup> in fere,<sup>4</sup>  
 Of flaumbande hwez,<sup>5</sup> boþe smale and grete;  
 Bot sytole-stryng<sup>6</sup> and gyternere<sup>7</sup>  
 Her reken<sup>8</sup> myrþe mozt not retrete<sup>9</sup>;  
 5 For, quen þose bryddez her wynggez bete,  
 Þay songen wyth a swete asent<sup>10</sup>;  
 So grac[i]os gle<sup>11</sup> couþe no mon gete  
 As here and se her adubbement.<sup>12</sup>

So al watz dubbet on dere asyse<sup>13</sup>;  
 10 Þat fryth þer<sup>14</sup> fortwne forth me ferez<sup>15</sup>;  
 Þe derþe<sup>16</sup> perof for to deuyse  
 Nis no wyȝ<sup>17</sup> worþe<sup>18</sup> þat tonge berez.  
 I welke<sup>19</sup> ay forth in wely<sup>20</sup> wyse;  
 No bonk<sup>21</sup> so byg<sup>22</sup> þat did me derez.<sup>23</sup>  
 15 Þe fyrre<sup>24</sup> in þe fryth, þe fei[r]er con ryse  
 Þe playn, þe plonttez,<sup>25</sup> þe spyse,<sup>26</sup> þe perez,<sup>27</sup>  
 And rawez<sup>28</sup> and randez<sup>29</sup> and rych revere<sup>30</sup>  
 As fyldor<sup>31</sup> fyn her bonkes brent.<sup>32</sup>  
 I wan<sup>33</sup> to a water by schore þat scherez<sup>34</sup>;  
 20 Lorde, dere watz hit<sup>35</sup> adubbement! 

The dubbemente of þo derworth<sup>36</sup> depe<sup>37</sup>  
 Wern bonkez<sup>38</sup> bene<sup>39</sup> of beryl bryȝt;  
 Swangeande<sup>40</sup> swete þe water con swepe,  
 Wyth a rownande<sup>41</sup> rourde<sup>42</sup> raykande<sup>43</sup> aryȝt;

1 birds  
 2 flew  
 3 woodland  
 4 together  
 5 flaming colors  
 6 citole-string  
 7 player on the cithern  
 8 lively  
 9 reproduce  
 10 harmony  
 11 joy  
 12 beauty  
 13 manner  
 14 where  
 15 transports

16 glory  
 17 person  
 18 worthy  
 19 walk  
 20 happy  
 21 hill  
 22 difficult  
 23 as to cause me annoyances  
 24 further  
 25 plants  
 26 spicy shrubs  
 27 pear-trees  
 28 hedges  
 29 borders of streams  
 30 rivers

31 thread of gold (Fr. *fil d'or*)  
 32 steep  
 33 made my way  
 34 runs swiftly by  
 35 its  
 36 rare  
 37 deep stream  
 38 banks  
 39 pleasing  
 40 rushingly (?)  
 41 murmuring  
 42 voice  
 43 moving forward

In þe founce<sup>1</sup> þer stonden stonéz stepe,<sup>2</sup>  
 As glente<sup>3</sup> þurȝ glas þat glowed and glyȝt<sup>4</sup>  
 A[s] stremande sternez,<sup>5</sup> quen stroþe<sup>6</sup> men slepe,  
 Staren<sup>7</sup> in welkyn in wynter nyȝt;  
 For uche a pobbel<sup>8</sup> in pole<sup>9</sup> þer pyȝt<sup>10</sup> 5  
 Watz emerad, saffer,<sup>11</sup> oþer gemme gente,<sup>12</sup>  
 Þat alle þe loȝe<sup>13</sup> lemed of<sup>14</sup> lyȝt,  
 So dere watz hit adubbement.

The dubbement dere of doun<sup>15</sup> and dalez,  
 Of wod and water and wlonk<sup>16</sup> playnez, 10  
 Bylde<sup>17</sup> in me blys, abated my balez,<sup>18</sup>  
 Forbidden<sup>19</sup> my stresse,<sup>20</sup> dystryed<sup>21</sup> my paynez.  
 Doun after a strem þat dryȝly<sup>22</sup> halez<sup>23</sup>  
 I bowed in blys. Bredful<sup>24</sup> my braynez;  
 Þe fyrre I folȝed<sup>25</sup> þose floty<sup>26</sup> valez, 15  
 Þe more strengþe of joye myn herte straynez.  
 As fortune fares þer as ho fraynez,<sup>27</sup>  
 Wheþer solace ho sende oþer ellez sore,<sup>28</sup>  
 Þe wyȝ to wham her wylle ho waynez<sup>29</sup>  
 Hyttez<sup>30</sup> to have ay more and more. 20

More of weel<sup>31</sup> watz in þat wyse  
 Þen I cowþe telle þaȝ I tom<sup>32</sup> hade;  
 For urþely<sup>33</sup> herte myȝt not suffyse  
 To þe tenþe dole<sup>34</sup> of þo gladnez glade.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>1</sup> bottom of the stream<sup>2</sup> glittering<sup>3</sup> gleam<sup>4</sup> shimmered<sup>5</sup> stars streaming with light<sup>6</sup> secure (?)<sup>7</sup> glitter<sup>8</sup> pebble<sup>9</sup> pool<sup>10</sup> set<sup>11</sup> sapphire<sup>12</sup> precious<sup>13</sup> water<sup>14</sup> gleamed with<sup>15</sup> hill<sup>16</sup> fair<sup>17</sup> caused to spring up<sup>18</sup> sorrows<sup>19</sup> did away with<sup>20</sup> anguish<sup>21</sup> destroyed<sup>22</sup> mightily<sup>23</sup> flows<sup>24</sup> brimful<sup>25</sup> followed<sup>26</sup> watery<sup>27</sup> where she desires<sup>28</sup> sorrow<sup>29</sup> bestows<sup>30</sup> strives<sup>31</sup> joy<sup>32</sup> leisure<sup>33</sup> earthly<sup>34</sup> part<sup>35</sup> happy

Forþy<sup>1</sup> I þoȝt þat paradyse  
 Watz þer over gayn<sup>2</sup> þo bonkez brade<sup>3</sup>;  
 I hoped<sup>4</sup> þe water were a devyse<sup>5</sup>  
 Bytwene myrþez<sup>6</sup> by merez<sup>7</sup> made;  
 5 Byȝonde þe broke,<sup>8</sup> by slente<sup>9</sup> oþer slade,<sup>10</sup>  
 I hope þat mote<sup>11</sup> merked<sup>12</sup> wore.  
 Bot þe water watz depe, I dorst not wade,  
 And ever me longed a[y] more and more.

More and more, and ȝet wel mare,  
 10 Me lyste<sup>13</sup> to se þe broke byȝonde;  
 For if hit watz fayr þer I con fare,  
 Wel loveloker<sup>14</sup> watz þe fyrrre londe.  
 Abowte me con I stote<sup>15</sup> and stare,  
 To fynde a forþe<sup>16</sup> faste con I fonde<sup>17</sup>;  
 15 Bot woþez<sup>18</sup> mo iwysse þer ware,  
 Þe fyrrre I stalked by þe stronde;  
 And ever me þoȝt I schulde not wonde<sup>19</sup>  
 For wo þer welez so wynne<sup>20</sup> wore.  
 Þenne nwe note<sup>21</sup> me com on honde,  
 20 þat meved<sup>22</sup> my mynde ay more and more.

More mervayle con my dom<sup>23</sup> adaunt<sup>24</sup>;  
 I seȝ<sup>25</sup> byȝonde þat myry<sup>26</sup> mere  
 A crystal clyffe ful relusaunt<sup>27</sup>;  
 Mony ryal<sup>28</sup> ray con fro hit rere.<sup>29</sup>  
 25 At þe fote þerof þer sete a faunt,<sup>30</sup>  
 A mayden of menske<sup>31</sup> ful debonere;

1 wherefore  
 2 over against; MS. oþer  
 gayn

3 broad  
 4 supposed

5 division  
 6 pleasure-gardens

7 boundary-lines

8 stream

9 slope

10 dale

11 city (referring to the New  
 Jerusalem)

12 placed

13 I yearned

14 lovelier

15 stumble

16 ford

17 seek

18 dangers

19 hesitate

20 fair

21 a new matter

22 stirred

23 mind

24 overcome

25 saw

26 lovely

27 reflecting much light

28 royal

29 leap

30 young person (OF. *enfant*)

31 decorous bearing



Blysnande<sup>1</sup> whyt watz hyr bleaunt<sup>2</sup> —  
 I knew hyr wel, I hade sen hyr ere<sup>3</sup> —  
 As glysnande<sup>4</sup> golde þat man con schere,<sup>5</sup>  
 So schon þat schene<sup>6</sup> anunder schore.<sup>7</sup>  
 On lenghe<sup>8</sup> I loked to hyr þere,  
 þe lenger I knew hyr more and more. 5

The more I frayste<sup>9</sup> hyr fayre face,  
 Her fygyre fyn, quen I had fonte,<sup>10</sup>  
 Suche gladande<sup>11</sup> glory con to me glace<sup>12</sup>  
 As lyttel byfore þerto watz wonte. 10  
 To calle hyr lyste<sup>13</sup> con me enchace,<sup>14</sup>  
 Bot baysment<sup>15</sup> gef myn hert a brunt<sup>16</sup>;  
 I seȝ hyr in so strange a place,  
 Such a burre<sup>17</sup> myȝt make myn herte blunt.<sup>18</sup>  
 Þenne vereȝ<sup>19</sup> ho up her fayre frount,<sup>20</sup> 15  
 Hyr vysayge whyt as playn yvore,  
 Þat stonge myn hert ful stray<sup>21</sup> atount,<sup>22</sup>  
 And ever þe lenger, þe more and more.

More þen me lyste my drede aros;  
 I stod ful styлле and dorste not calle, 20  
 Wyth ygen open and mouth ful clos;  
 I stod as hende<sup>23</sup> as hawk in halle.  
 I hope<sup>24</sup> þat gostly<sup>25</sup> watz þat porpose<sup>26</sup>;  
 I dred onende<sup>27</sup> quat schulde byfalle —  
 Lest ho me eschaped þat I þer chos,<sup>28</sup> 25  
 Er I at steven<sup>29</sup> hir moȝt stalle.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>1</sup> gleaming  
<sup>2</sup> tunic (OF. *bliant*)

<sup>3</sup> erstwhile  
<sup>4</sup> glittering

<sup>5</sup> cut

<sup>6</sup> fair one

<sup>7</sup> at the foot of the bank

<sup>8</sup> at a distance

<sup>9</sup> scanned

<sup>10</sup> perceived it

<sup>11</sup> causing me to rejoice

<sup>12</sup> glide

<sup>13</sup> the desire

<sup>14</sup> pursue

<sup>15</sup> confusion

<sup>16</sup> blow

<sup>17</sup> shock

<sup>18</sup> stunned

<sup>19</sup> lifts

<sup>20</sup> brow

<sup>21</sup> out of the right course

<sup>22</sup> confounded

<sup>23</sup> quiet

<sup>24</sup> suppose

<sup>25</sup> spectral

<sup>26</sup> intent, thing intended

<sup>27</sup> concerning

<sup>28</sup> discerned

<sup>29</sup> with my voice

<sup>30</sup> stop

þat gracios gay<sup>1</sup> wythouten galle,  
 So smoþe, so smal, so seme<sup>2</sup> slygt,<sup>3</sup>  
 Rysez up in hir araye ryalle,  
 A prec[i]os pyece<sup>4</sup> in perlez pygt.<sup>5</sup>

- 5 Perlez pygte of ryal prys<sup>6</sup>  
 þere moȝt mon by grace haf sene,  
 Quen þat frech<sup>7</sup> as flor-de-lys  
 Doun þe bonke con boȝe<sup>8</sup> bydene.<sup>9</sup>  
 Al blysnande whyt watz hir bleaunt of biys,<sup>10</sup>  
 10 Upon<sup>11</sup> at sydez, and bounden bene<sup>12</sup>  
 Wyth þe myrreste margarys,<sup>13</sup> at my devyse,<sup>14</sup>  
 þat ever I seȝ ȝet with myn yȝen;  
 Wyth lappez<sup>15</sup> large, I wot and I wene,  
 Dubbed with double perle and dyȝte,<sup>16</sup>  
 15 Her cortel<sup>17</sup> of self sute<sup>18</sup> schene,  
 Wyth precios perlez al umbepyȝte.<sup>19</sup>

- A pygt<sup>20</sup> coroune<sup>21</sup> ȝet<sup>22</sup> wer<sup>23</sup> þat gyrlē,  
 Of marjorys<sup>24</sup> and non oþer ston,  
 Hize pynakled of cler quyt perle,  
 20 Wyth flurtd<sup>25</sup> flowrez perfet<sup>26</sup> upon.  
 To hed<sup>27</sup> hade ho non oþer herle<sup>28</sup>;  
 Her here-leke<sup>29</sup> al hyr umbegon.<sup>30</sup>  
 Her semblaunt<sup>31</sup> sade for doc oþer erle,<sup>32</sup>  
 Her ble<sup>33</sup> more blagt<sup>34</sup> þen whallez bon<sup>35</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> radiant one<sup>2</sup> modest<sup>3</sup> slight<sup>4</sup> creature, thing<sup>5</sup> arrayed<sup>6</sup> excellence<sup>7</sup> sweet one<sup>8</sup> did betake herself<sup>9</sup> forthwith<sup>10</sup> fine linen; MS. hir beauniys (?)

(em. Osgood)

<sup>11</sup> open<sup>12</sup> pleasingly<sup>13</sup> pearls<sup>14</sup> in my opinion<sup>15</sup> loose folds<sup>16</sup> adorned<sup>17</sup> kirtle<sup>18</sup> of the very same fashion<sup>19</sup> bordered<sup>20</sup> set with jewels<sup>21</sup> crown<sup>22</sup> besides<sup>23</sup> wore<sup>24</sup> figured<sup>25</sup> perfectly wrought<sup>26</sup> on her head<sup>27</sup> fillet; MS. werle<sup>28</sup> locks of hair (?); MS.

lere leke

<sup>29</sup> encircled<sup>30</sup> countenance<sup>31</sup> demure enough to suit

duke or earl

<sup>32</sup> complexion<sup>33</sup> white (bleached)<sup>34</sup> Ivory is called whale's

bone in ME.

As schorne golde schyr <sup>1</sup> her fax <sup>2</sup> þenne schon,  
 On schylderez <sup>3</sup> þat leghe <sup>4</sup> unlapped <sup>5</sup> lygte.<sup>6</sup>  
 Her depe colour get wonted <sup>7</sup> non  
 Of precios perle in porfyl <sup>8</sup> pygte.

Pygt and poyned <sup>9</sup> watz uche a hemme, 5  
 At honde, at sydez, at overtüre,<sup>10</sup>  
 Wyth whyte perle and non oþer gemme,  
 And bornyste quyte watz hyr vestüre.  
 Bot a wonder perle wythouten wemme <sup>11</sup>  
 In myddez hyr breste watz sette so sure. 10  
 A mannez dom <sup>12</sup> mozt dryȝly <sup>13</sup> demme <sup>14</sup>  
 Er mynde mozt malte in hit mesure <sup>15</sup> ;  
 I hope no tong mozt endure <sup>16</sup>  
 No saverly <sup>17</sup> saghe <sup>18</sup> say of þat syȝt,  
 So watz hit clene and cler and pure, 15  
 Þat precios perle þer hit watz pygt.

Pygt in perle, þat precios py[ec]e  
 On wyþer half <sup>19</sup> water com doun þe schore ;  
 No gladder gome <sup>20</sup> heþen <sup>21</sup> into Grece  
 Þen I quen ho on brymme wore <sup>22</sup> ; 20  
 Ho watz me nerre <sup>23</sup> þen aunte or nece ;  
 My joy forþy watz much þe more.  
 Ho p[ro]fered me speche, þat special spece,<sup>24</sup>  
 Enclynande lowe in wommon lore,<sup>25</sup>  
 Cagte of <sup>26</sup> her coroun of grete tresore, 25  
 And haylsed <sup>27</sup> me wyth a lote lygte.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>1</sup> bright<sup>2</sup> hair<sup>3</sup> shoulders<sup>4</sup> lay<sup>5</sup> unbound<sup>6</sup> lightly<sup>7</sup> lacked<sup>8</sup> embroidered border<sup>9</sup> pierced (with open-work design)<sup>10</sup> opening<sup>11</sup> blemish<sup>12</sup> judgment<sup>13</sup> seriously<sup>14</sup> be baffled<sup>15</sup> enter into its measure of excellence<sup>16</sup> be equal to the task<sup>17</sup> sweet<sup>18</sup> recital<sup>19</sup> on the opposite side of<sup>20</sup> man<sup>21</sup> hence<sup>22</sup> was on the brink<sup>23</sup> closer (*perhaps* dearer)<sup>24</sup> rare being ; MS. spyce<sup>25</sup> according to women's etiquette<sup>26</sup> caught off<sup>27</sup> greeted<sup>28</sup> manner blithe

Wel watz me þat ever I watz bore,  
To sware <sup>1</sup> þat swete in perlez pygte!

‘O perle,’ quod I, ‘in perlez pygt,  
Art þou my perle þat I haf playned,<sup>2</sup>  
5 Regretted <sup>3</sup> by myn one,<sup>4</sup> on nygte?  
Much longeyng haf I for þe layned,<sup>5</sup>  
Syþen into gresse <sup>6</sup> þou me aglygte<sup>7</sup>;  
Pensyf, payred,<sup>8</sup> I am forpayned,<sup>9</sup>  
And þou in a lyf of lykyng <sup>10</sup> lygte,<sup>11</sup>  
10 In paradys erde,<sup>12</sup> of stryf unstrayned.<sup>13</sup>  
What wyrde <sup>14</sup> hatz hyder my juel <sup>15</sup> wayned,<sup>16</sup>  
And don me in del <sup>17</sup> and gret daunger?  
Fro <sup>18</sup> we in twynne <sup>19</sup> wern towen <sup>20</sup> and twayned,<sup>21</sup>  
I haf ben a joylez juelere.’

15 That juel þenne in gemmez gente <sup>22</sup>  
Vered <sup>23</sup> up her vyse <sup>24</sup> wyth ygen graye,  
Set on hyr coroun of perle orient,  
And soberly after þenne <sup>25</sup> con ho say:  
‘Sir, ge haf your tale mysetente,<sup>26</sup>  
20 To say your perle is al awaye,  
þat is in cofer so comly clente,<sup>27</sup>  
As in þis gardyn gracios <sup>28</sup> gaye,  
Hereinne to lenge <sup>29</sup> for ever and play,  
þer mys nee mornyng <sup>30</sup> com never nere <sup>31</sup>;  
25 Her were a forser <sup>32</sup> for þe, in faye,<sup>33</sup>  
If þou were a gentyl jueler.

<sup>1</sup> answer<sup>2</sup> lamented<sup>3</sup> grieved for<sup>4</sup> by myself<sup>5</sup> kept silent about<sup>6</sup> the sod (grass)<sup>7</sup> slipped away<sup>8</sup> worn<sup>9</sup> overcome with pain<sup>10</sup> pleasure<sup>11</sup> arrived<sup>12</sup> the country of paradise<sup>13</sup> unmolested<sup>14</sup> fate<sup>15</sup> jewel<sup>16</sup> brought; MS. vayned<sup>17</sup> sorrow; MS. þys del<sup>18</sup> since<sup>19</sup> in twain<sup>20</sup> drawn<sup>21</sup> torn apart<sup>22</sup> precious<sup>23</sup> turned<sup>24</sup> face<sup>25</sup> straightway<sup>26</sup> heeded ill<sup>27</sup> enclosed so beautifully<sup>28</sup> delightful<sup>29</sup> tarry<sup>30</sup> where sin nor mourning<sup>31</sup> MS. here<sup>32</sup> treasure-chest<sup>33</sup> indeed

' Bot, jueler gente, if þou schal lose  
 Þy joy for a gemme þat þe watz lef,<sup>1</sup>  
 Me þynk þe put in a mad porpose,<sup>2</sup>  
 And busyez þe<sup>3</sup> aboute a raysoun bref<sup>4</sup> ;  
 For þat þou lestez<sup>5</sup> watz bot a rose 5  
 Þat flowred and fayled<sup>6</sup> as kynde hyt gef<sup>7</sup> ;  
 Now, þurȝ kynde of þe kyste<sup>8</sup> þat hyt con close,<sup>9</sup>  
 To a perle of prys hit is put in pref.<sup>10</sup>  
 And þou hatz called þy wyrde a þef,<sup>11</sup>  
 Þat oȝt of noȝt<sup>12</sup> hatz mad þe cler,<sup>13</sup> 10  
 Þou blamez<sup>14</sup> þe bote<sup>15</sup> of þy meschef<sup>16</sup> ;  
 Þou art no kynde<sup>17</sup> jueler.'

A juel to me þen watz þys geste,<sup>18</sup>  
 And juelez wern hyr gentyl sawez.<sup>19</sup>  
 ' Iwyse,' quod I, ' my blysfol beste,<sup>20</sup> 15  
 My grete dystresse þou al todrawez.<sup>21</sup>  
 To be excused I make requeste ;  
 I trawed<sup>22</sup> my perle don out of dawez<sup>23</sup> ;  
 Now haf I fonde hyt, I schal ma feste,<sup>24</sup>  
 And wony<sup>25</sup> wyth hyt in schyr<sup>26</sup> wod-schawez,<sup>27</sup> 20  
 And love my Lorde and al his lawez,  
 Þat hatz me broȝ[t] þys blys ner ;  
 Now were I at<sup>28</sup> yow byȝonde þise wawez,<sup>29</sup>  
 I were a joyfol jueler.'

' Jueler,' sayde þat gemme clene,<sup>30</sup> 25  
 ' Wy borde<sup>31</sup> ȝe men, so madde ȝe be ?

<sup>1</sup> dear<sup>2</sup> given over to mad intent<sup>3</sup> thou troublest thyself<sup>4</sup> matter of short duration<sup>5</sup> lost<sup>6</sup> withered<sup>7</sup> nature permitted it<sup>8</sup> chest<sup>9</sup> enclose<sup>10</sup> it is proved to be<sup>11</sup> thief<sup>12</sup> something from nothing<sup>13</sup> manifestly<sup>14</sup> dost reproach<sup>15</sup> remedy<sup>16</sup> injury<sup>17</sup> grateful<sup>18</sup> guest<sup>19</sup> words<sup>20</sup> best one<sup>21</sup> puttest an end to<sup>22</sup> believed<sup>23</sup> perished<sup>24</sup> make merry<sup>25</sup> dwell<sup>26</sup> bright<sup>27</sup> groves<sup>28</sup> beside<sup>29</sup> waves<sup>30</sup> pure<sup>31</sup> jest

þre wordez hatz þou spoken at ene<sup>1</sup>;  
 Unavyssed,<sup>2</sup> forsoþe, wern alle þre;  
 Þou ne woste<sup>3</sup> in worlde<sup>4</sup> quat on dotz mene,<sup>5</sup>  
 Þy worde byfore þy wytte con fle.  
 5 Þou says þou trawez me in þis dene,<sup>6</sup>  
 Bycawse þou may wyth yȝen me se;  
 Anoþer þou says, in þys countre  
 Þyself schal won wyth me ryȝt here;  
 10 Þe þrydde, to passe þys water fre —  
 Þat may no joyfol jueler. . . .

' In blysse I se þe blyþely blent,<sup>7</sup>  
 And I a man al mornyf<sup>8</sup> mate<sup>9</sup>;  
 3e take þeron ful lyttel tente,<sup>10</sup>  
 Þaȝ I hente<sup>11</sup> ofte harmez hate.<sup>12</sup>  
 15 Bot now I am here in your presente,<sup>13</sup>  
 I wolde bysech wythouten debate  
 3e wolde me say in sobre asente<sup>14</sup>  
 What lyf ȝe lede erly and late;  
 For I am ful fayn<sup>15</sup> þat your astate<sup>16</sup>  
 20 Is worþen<sup>17</sup> to worschyp and wele, iwysse;  
 Of alle my joy þe hyȝe gate,<sup>18</sup>  
 Hit is in grounde<sup>19</sup> of alle my blysse.'

' Now blysse, burne,<sup>20</sup> mot þe bytyde,<sup>21</sup>  
 Þen sayde þat lufsoum of lyth and lere<sup>22</sup>;  
 25 ' And welcum here to walk and byde,  
 For now þy speche is to me dere;  
 Maysterful mod<sup>23</sup> and hyȝe pryde,  
 I hete<sup>24</sup> þe, arn heterly<sup>25</sup> hated here.

<sup>1</sup> one time<sup>2</sup> ill considered<sup>3</sup> knowest not<sup>4</sup> at all<sup>5</sup> a single one means (*lit.*  
does mean)<sup>6</sup> valley<sup>7</sup> joyously mingled<sup>8</sup> mournful<sup>9</sup> dejected<sup>10</sup> heed<sup>11</sup> experience<sup>12</sup> burning<sup>13</sup> presence<sup>14</sup> compliance<sup>15</sup> glad<sup>16</sup> condition<sup>17</sup> is turned<sup>18</sup> road<sup>19</sup> at the basis<sup>20</sup> sir<sup>21</sup> that one, lovely of limb  
and face<sup>22</sup> temper<sup>23</sup> assure<sup>24</sup> bitterly

My Lorde ne lovez not for to chyde,  
 For meke arn alle þat wonez hym nere;  
 And when in hys place þou schal apere,  
 Be dep devote <sup>1</sup> in hol <sup>2</sup> mekenesse;  
 My Lorde þe Lamb lovez ay such chere <sup>3</sup> — 5  
 þat is þe grounde of alle my blysse.

'A blysful lyf þou says I lede;  
 þou woldez know þerof þe stage.<sup>4</sup>  
 þow wost wel when þy perle con schede <sup>5</sup>  
 I watz ful zong and tender of age; 10  
 Bot my Lorde þe Lombe, þurz hys Godhede,  
 He toke myself to hys maryage,  
 Corounde me quene in blysse to brede <sup>6</sup>  
 In lenghe of dayez þat ever schal wage <sup>7</sup>;  
 And sesed in <sup>8</sup> alle hys herytage 15  
 Hys lef <sup>9</sup> is, I am holy hysse;  
 Hys prese,<sup>10</sup> hys prys,<sup>11</sup> and hys parage,<sup>12</sup>  
 Is rote and grounde of alle my blysse.'

## GODRIC'S HYMNS

It is not for beauty of phrasing or loveliness of movement that these verses are remarkable. They are here printed because they are early (Godric died in 1170); because their author was illiterate; and because he had such a singular career. He was successively peddler, pirate, and palmer, before, at the age of forty or over, he turned to the hermit's life. He is described as broad-shouldered, with well-set, sinewy frame, and flowing beard; and his hair in earlier life was black. Of him, as of Chaucer's shipman, it might be said:

With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.

During his wandering life, he was for several years the master of a vessel plying between England, Scotland, Denmark, and Flanders; journeyed twice to Jerusalem, and on May 29, 1102, carried Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem, to Jaffa in his ship; and visited Rome, St. Giles in Provence, and Compostella. The

<sup>1</sup> deeply devout

<sup>2</sup> all

<sup>3</sup> demeanor

<sup>4</sup> degree of advancement

<sup>5</sup> did fall

<sup>6</sup> dwell

<sup>7</sup> endure

<sup>8</sup> put in possession of

<sup>9</sup> precious one

<sup>10</sup> worth

<sup>11</sup> excellence

<sup>12</sup> noble lineage

last sixty years of his life he spent at Finchale, near Durham. He knew a little French, and could read at least the Psalter in Latin. He 'had unique influence over animals. His heifer, the hare that was nibbling at his garden herbs, the frozen birds, the stag pursued by huntsmen, all found a friend in him' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*). In extreme old age he became clairvoyant, and 'would interrupt his conversation to utter prayers for the storm-tossed vessels of his dreams.' See Kingsley, *Hermits*; Alban Butler's and Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints*; and especially the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

The music of all three hymns, found in MS. Brit. Mus. Royal S. F. 7, is reproduced as the frontispiece of Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody*, with a somewhat imperfect text.

### HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

This hymn was taught, as he believed, to Godric, by the Virgin Mary herself. The text is from Zupitza's edition (*Eng. Stud.* 11. 423). The music to which it was sung is printed in Stevenson's edition of Reginald's life of the saint (Surtees Soc., Vol. 20), p. 288.

Sainte Marie, Virgine,  
 Moder Jesu Cristes Nazarene,  
 Onfo,<sup>1</sup> scild,<sup>2</sup> help þin<sup>3</sup> Godric,  
 Onfang,<sup>1</sup> bring hehlic<sup>4</sup> wið þe in Godes ric.<sup>5</sup>

5 Sainte Marie, Cristes bur,<sup>6</sup>  
 Maidenenes clenhad,<sup>7</sup> moderes flur,<sup>8</sup>  
 Dilie<sup>9</sup> mine sinne, rixe<sup>10</sup> in min mod,  
 Bring me to winne<sup>11</sup> wið self God.

### HYMN OF BURGWIN, GODRIC'S SISTER

Godric's sister had led a hermit's life in a cell near him at Finchale. After her death he was concerned about the state of her soul. One night he had a vision of the Virgin Mary followed by two men in white garments, and between them the spirit of his sister. They floated down upon the altar of his oratory, and his sister, standing upon the altar, sang the following lines (Zupitza, p. 429).

<sup>1</sup> receive  
<sup>2</sup> protect  
<sup>3</sup> thy  
<sup>4</sup> gloriously

<sup>5</sup> kingdom  
<sup>6</sup> bower; chamber (alluding to Ps. 19. 5, understood of Christ as the bridegroom)  
<sup>7</sup> purity

<sup>8</sup> flower  
<sup>9</sup> blot out  
<sup>10</sup> reign  
<sup>11</sup> bliss



The 'scamel,' or footstool, here refers to the altar, with allusion to 1 Chron. 28. 3; Ps. 99. 5; 132. 7; Isa. 60. 13; for the footstool may be identified with the mercy-seat of the old dispensation (Exod. 25. 16-22), and hence with the altar in the Christian church.

Crist and Seinte Marie swa <sup>1</sup> on scamel me iledde <sup>2</sup>  
 þat Ic on þis erðe ne silde <sup>3</sup> wið mine bare fote itredie. <sup>4</sup>

## HYMN TO ST. NICHOLAS

St. Nicholas is reported by his biographer, Reginald (ed. Stevenson, p. 202), to have once visited Godric in a dream at Eastertide, in company with angels descending to Christ's sepulchre, to have sung with them, and to have urged Godric to sing also, which he did. Our hymn, however, has no direct allusion to this occurrence.

The third line should, according to Zupitza (p. 430), be brought into direct relation with the end of the first ('God's darling at thy birth, at thy bier') — which indicates that Godric's literary technique left something to be desired.

Sainte Nicholæs, Godes druð,  
 Tymbre <sup>5</sup> us faire scone <sup>6</sup> hus —  
 At þi burth, at þi bare —  
 Sainte Nicholæs, bring us wel þare. <sup>7</sup>

5

## I SIGH WHEN I SING

About 1310. From Bøddeker, pp. 210-2

I syke <sup>8</sup> when Y singe,  
 For sorewe þat Y se,  
 When Y wiþ wypinge <sup>9</sup>  
 Biholde upon þe tre,  
 Ant se Jesu, þe suete,  
 Is <sup>10</sup> herte-blod forlete <sup>11</sup>  
 For þe love of me.  
 Ys <sup>10</sup> woundes waxen wete;  
 Þei wepen stille and mete <sup>12</sup>;  
 Marie rewep þe.

10

15

<sup>1</sup> so  
<sup>2</sup> led  
<sup>3</sup> should  
<sup>4</sup> tread

<sup>5</sup> build  
<sup>6</sup> beautiful  
<sup>7</sup> there  
<sup>8</sup> sigh

<sup>9</sup> weeping  
<sup>10</sup> his  
<sup>11</sup> lose  
<sup>12</sup> gently

Heȝe upon a doune,<sup>1</sup>  
 Þer al folk hit se may,  
 A mile from þe<sup>2</sup> toune,  
 Aboute þe midday,  
 5    Þe rode is up arered;  
 His frendes aren afered,  
 Ant clyngeþ<sup>3</sup> so<sup>4</sup> þe clay.  
 Þe rode stont<sup>5</sup> in stone;  
 Marie stont hire one,<sup>6</sup>  
 10    Ant seiþ 'Weylaway l'

When Y þe biholde  
 Wiþ eyȝen bryhte bo,<sup>7</sup>  
 Ant þi bodi colde,  
 15    Þi ble<sup>8</sup> waxeþ blo<sup>9</sup>;  
 Þou hengest al of blode  
 So heȝe upon þe rode,  
 Bituene þeues tuo.  
 Who may syke more?  
 Marie wepeþ sore,  
 20    Ant siþ<sup>10</sup> al þis wo.

Þe naylles beþ to stronge,  
 'Þe smyþes are to sleye<sup>11</sup>;  
 Þou bledest al to longe,  
 25    Þe tre is al to heyȝe.  
 Þe stones beoþ al wete,  
 Alas, Jesu, þe suete!  
 For nou frend hast þou non  
 Bote Seint Johan mournynde,  
 Ant Marie wepynde  
 30    For pyne þat þe ys on.

<sup>1</sup> hill<sup>2</sup> MS. uch (em. B.)<sup>3</sup> shrink up<sup>4</sup> like<sup>5</sup> stands; MS. stond<sup>6</sup> by herself<sup>7</sup> both<sup>8</sup> color<sup>9</sup> livid<sup>10</sup> MS. siht (em. B.)<sup>11</sup> skilful

Ofte when Y sike  
 And makie my mon,  
 Wel ille þah me like <sup>1</sup>  
 Wonder is hit non ;  
 When Y se honge heȝe, 5  
 Ant bittre pynes dreȝe, <sup>2</sup>  
 Jesu, my lemmon. <sup>3</sup>  
 His wondes sore smerte ;  
 Þe spere al to [h]is herte  
 Ant pourh [h]is syde [i]s <sup>4</sup> gon. 10

Ofte when Y syke,  
 Wiþ care Y am þourhsot <sup>5</sup> ;  
 When Y wake, Y wyke, <sup>6</sup>  
 Of serewe is al mi þoht.  
 Alas ! men beþ wode <sup>7</sup> 15  
 Þat suereþ by þe rode,  
 And selleþ him for noht  
 Þat bohte us out of synne.  
 He bring <sup>8</sup> us to wyne <sup>9</sup>  
 Þat haþ us duere <sup>10</sup> boht ! 20

## A SONG TO THE VIRGIN

Thirteenth century. From MS. Brit. Mus. Egerton 613, printed by Morris,  
*Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S. 49), pp. 194-5.

Of on þat is so fayr and brigȝt  
*Velut* <sup>11</sup> *maris stella*,  
 Brigȝter þan þe dayis ligȝt,  
*Parens et puella*.  
 Ic crie to þe ; þou se <sup>12</sup> to me ; 25  
 Levedy, preye þi Sone for me,  
*Tam pia*,

<sup>1</sup> if I like it full ill<sup>2</sup> suffer<sup>3</sup> darling<sup>4</sup> MS. sydes<sup>5</sup> pierced<sup>6</sup> grow weak<sup>7</sup> demented<sup>8</sup> subj.<sup>9</sup> bliss<sup>10</sup> dearly<sup>11</sup> MS. velud<sup>12</sup> look

þat Ic mote<sup>1</sup> come to þe,  
*Maria.*

Of kare<sup>2</sup> conseil<sup>3</sup> þou ert best,  
*Felix, fecundata ;*

5 Of alle wery<sup>4</sup> þou ert rest,  
*Mater honorata.*

Bisek him wiþ<sup>5</sup> milde mod  
 þat for ous alle s[h]ad [h]is blod  
*In cruce,*

10 þat we moten komen til him  
*In luce.*

Al þis world was forlore,  
*Eva peccatrice,*

15 Tyl our Lord was ybore  
*De te genitrice ;*

With *Ave*<sup>6</sup> it went away —  
 þuster<sup>7</sup> nyht — and comet[h] þe day  
*Salutis ;*

20 þe welle springeth ut of þe  
*Virtutis.*

Levedi, flour<sup>8</sup> of alle þing,<sup>9</sup>  
*Rosa sine spina,*

þu bere<sup>10</sup> Jesu, hevene King,  
*Gratia divina ;*

25 Of alle þu berst þe pris,<sup>11</sup>  
 Levedi, quene of Parays

*Electa,*  
 Mayde milde, moder *es*  
*Effecta.*

<sup>1</sup> may

<sup>2</sup> anxiety

<sup>3</sup> counsel

<sup>4</sup> who are weary

<sup>5</sup> MS. wiz

<sup>6</sup> hail (anagram of *Eva*)

<sup>7</sup> dark

<sup>8</sup> flower

<sup>9</sup> things

<sup>10</sup> barest

<sup>11</sup> prize

Wel he wot <sup>1</sup> he is þi Sone,  
*Ventre quem portasti ;*  
 He wyl nout werne <sup>2</sup> þe þi bone,<sup>3</sup>  
*Parvum quem lactasti ;*  
 So hende <sup>4</sup> and so god he is,<sup>5</sup>  
 He havet[h] brou[h]t ous to blis  
*Superni*  
 þat havez hidut <sup>6</sup> þe foule put <sup>7</sup>  
*Inferni.*

5

## STAND WELL, MOTHER, UNDER ROOD

About 1310. From Bøddeker, pp. 206-8

' Stond wel, moder, under rode,  
 Byhold <sup>8</sup> þy Sone wiþ glade mode ;  
 Blyþe, moder, myht <sup>9</sup> þou be !'  
 ' Sone, hou shulde Y blyþe stonde ?  
 Y se þin fet, Y se þin honde,  
 Nayled to þe harde tre.'

10

15

' Moder, do wey <sup>10</sup> þy wepinge ;  
 Y þole <sup>11</sup> deþ for monkynde,  
 For my gult þole Y non.'  
 ' Sone, Y fele þe dede-stounde <sup>12</sup> ;  
 þe suert is at myn herte grounde <sup>13</sup>  
 þat me byhet <sup>14</sup> Symeon.'

20

' Moder, merci, let me deye,  
 For Adam out of helle [to] beye,  
 Ant his kun, þat is fcllore.'

<sup>1</sup> knows

<sup>2</sup> deny

<sup>3</sup> prayer, boon

<sup>4</sup> gracious

<sup>5</sup> MS. his

<sup>6</sup> covered

<sup>7</sup> pit

<sup>8</sup> MS. -holt

<sup>9</sup> mayst

<sup>10</sup> away

<sup>11</sup> suffer

<sup>12</sup> death-pang

<sup>13</sup> core

<sup>14</sup> foretold

' Sone, what shal me to rede <sup>1</sup>?  
My peyne pyneþ me to dede <sup>2</sup>;  
Lat me dege þe byfore.'

5 ' Moder, þou rewe al of þi Bern <sup>3</sup>;  
þou wosshe awai þe bloody tern, <sup>4</sup>  
Hit dop <sup>5</sup> me worse þen my ded.'  
' Sone, hou may Y teres werne <sup>6</sup>?  
Y se þe bloody stremes erne <sup>7</sup>  
From þin herte to my fet.'

10 ' Moder, nou Y may þe seye,  
Betere is þat Ich one <sup>8</sup> deye  
þen <sup>9</sup> al monkunde to helle go.'  
' Sone, Y se þi bodi bysw[o]ngen, <sup>10</sup>  
Fet and honde þourhout stongen <sup>11</sup>;  
15 No wonder þah <sup>12</sup> me be wo.'

' Moder, nou Y shal þe telle,  
Ȝef Y ne dege, þou gost to helle;  
Y pole ded for þine sake.'  
' Sone, þou art so meke and mynde, <sup>18</sup>  
20 Ne wyt <sup>14</sup> me naht — hit is my kynde <sup>15</sup> —  
þat Y for þe þis sorewe make.'

' Moder, nou þou miht wel leren <sup>16</sup>  
Whet sorewe haveþ <sup>17</sup> þat children beren,  
Whet sorewe hit is wiþ childe gon.'  
25 ' Sorewe? ywis, <sup>18</sup> Y con þe telle!  
Bote <sup>19</sup> hit be þe pyne <sup>20</sup> of helle,  
More serewe wot Y non.'

<sup>1</sup> as advice<sup>2</sup> death<sup>3</sup> son<sup>4</sup> tears<sup>5</sup> affects<sup>6</sup> forbid<sup>7</sup> run<sup>8</sup> alone<sup>9</sup> than<sup>10</sup> em. B.<sup>11</sup> pierced<sup>12</sup> if<sup>18</sup> considerate<sup>14</sup> blame<sup>15</sup> nature<sup>16</sup> canst easily explain<sup>17</sup> they have<sup>18</sup> indeed<sup>19</sup> unless<sup>20</sup> pain

' Moder, rew of moder-kare,  
 For nou þou wost of moder-fare,<sup>1</sup>  
 þah<sup>2</sup> þou be clene mayden on.<sup>3</sup>  
 ' Sone, help at alle nede  
 Alle þo þat to me grede,<sup>4</sup> 5  
 Maiden, wif, ant fol<sup>5</sup> wymmon.'

' Moder, may Y no lengore duelle,<sup>6</sup>  
 þe time is come, Y shal<sup>7</sup> to helle;  
 þe þridde day Y ryse upon.'  
 ' Sone, Y wil wiþ þe [be] founden;  
 Y deye, ywis, for þine wounden — 10  
 So soreweful ded nes never non.'

When he ros, þo<sup>8</sup> fel hire sorewe,  
 Hire blisse sprong þe þridde morewe;  
 Blyþe, moder, were þou þo!  
 Levedy, for þat ilke blisse, 15  
 Bysech þi Sone of sunnes lisse<sup>9</sup>;  
 þou be oure sheld aȝeyn<sup>10</sup> oure fo.

Blessed be þou, ful of blysse!  
 Let us never hevene misse, 20  
 þourh þi<sup>11</sup> suete Sones myht.  
 Loverd, for þat ilke<sup>12</sup> blod  
 þat þou sheddest on þe rod,  
 þou bryng us into hevene-lyht.

<sup>1</sup> mother-doings  
<sup>2</sup> though; MS. þou  
<sup>3</sup> one, a; MS. mon  
<sup>4</sup> cry

<sup>5</sup> foolish, loose  
<sup>6</sup> stay  
<sup>7</sup> must  
<sup>8</sup> then

<sup>9</sup> sin's remission  
<sup>10</sup> against  
<sup>11</sup> MS. sourh þich (em. B.)  
<sup>12</sup> same

## AS I RODE

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 218-9

Ase Y me rod, þis ender<sup>1</sup> day,  
 By grene wode to seche play,  
 Mid herte Y þohte al on a may,<sup>2</sup>  
 Suetest of alle þinge;  
 5 Lyþe,<sup>3</sup> and Ich ou telle may  
 Al of þat suete þinge.

Þis maiden is suete ant fre of blod,<sup>4</sup>  
 Briht and feyr, of milde mod;  
 10 Alle heo mai don us god  
 Þurh hire bysechyng;  
 Of hire he tok fleýsh and blod,  
 Jesu Crist, hevene Kynge.

Wip al mi lif Y love þat may;  
 He is mi solas nyht and day,  
 15 My joie, and eke my beste play,<sup>5</sup>  
 Ant eke my love-longyng;  
 Al þe betere me is þat day  
 Þat Ich of hire syng.

20 Of alle þinge Y love hir mest,<sup>6</sup>  
 My dayes blis, my nyhtes rest,  
 Heo counseileþ and helpeþ best  
 Boþe elde and gyng<sup>7</sup>;  
 Nou Y may, ȝef Y wole,  
 Þe fif joyes mynge.<sup>8</sup>

25 Þe furst joie of þat wymman<sup>9</sup> —  
 When Gabriel from hevene cam,

1 other  
 2 maid  
 3 listen

4 descent, parentage  
 5 delight  
 6 most

7 old and young  
 8 mention  
 9 MS. wyn-



Ant seide God shulde bicomē man,  
 Ant of hire be bore,  
 And bringe up of helle pyn  
 Monkyn <sup>1</sup> þat wes forlore.

þat oþer <sup>2</sup> joie of þat may *Birth of Christ* <sup>5</sup>  
 Wes o <sup>3</sup> Cristesmasse day,  
 When God wes bore, on þorwe <sup>4</sup> lay, *naturly*  
 Ant brohte us lyhtnesse <sup>5</sup>;  
 þestri <sup>6</sup> wes seie <sup>7</sup> byfore day,  
 þis hirdes <sup>8</sup> bereþ wytnesse. 10

þe þridde joie of þat levedy —  
 þat men clepeþ þe Epyphany, *Visit of Magi*  
 When þe kynges come, wery, *Epiphany*  
 To presente hyre Sone 15  
 Wiþ myrre, gold, and encenz,  
 þat <sup>9</sup> wes Mon bicomē.

þe furþe joie we telle mawen —  
 On Estermorewe, w[h]en <sup>10</sup> hit gon dawen, <sup>11</sup> *Resurrection of Christ*  
 Hyre sone, þat wes slawen,  
 Aros in fleysþ and bon; 20  
 More joie ne mai me haven  
 Wyf ne mayden non.

þe fifte joie of þat wymman —  
 When hire body to hevene cam, *Assumption*  
 þe soule to þe body nam, <sup>12</sup> 25  
 Ase hit wes woned to bene. <sup>13</sup>  
 Crist, leve <sup>14</sup> us alle wiþ þat wymman  
 þat joie al for te sene.

<sup>1</sup> mankind  
<sup>2</sup> second  
<sup>3</sup> on  
<sup>4</sup> manger  
<sup>5</sup> light

<sup>6</sup> darkness  
<sup>7</sup> seen  
<sup>8</sup> shepherds  
<sup>9</sup> who  
<sup>10</sup> em. B.

<sup>11</sup> dawn  
<sup>12</sup> joined  
<sup>13</sup> be  
<sup>14</sup> grant

- Preye we alle to oure levedy,  
 Ant to þe sontes <sup>1</sup> þat woneþ <sup>2</sup> hire by,  
 þat heo <sup>3</sup> of us haven merci,  
 Ant þat we ne misse  
 5 In þis world to ben holy,  
 Ant wyne hevene blysse.

## WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN OF MARY FREE

About 1456. From MS. Brit. Mus. 11arl. 5396, printed by Wright, *Specimens of Old Christmas Carols* (Percy Soc. 4), p. 32.

*Christo paremus canticam,*  
*[In] excelsis gloria.*

- When Cryst was born of Mary fre,<sup>4</sup>  
 10 In Bedlem in that fayre cyte,  
 Angellis song ther with myrth and gle :  
*In excelsis gloria.*

- Herdmen <sup>5</sup> beheld thes angellis brygt,  
 To hem apperyd wyth gret lygt,  
 15 And seyð : ' Goddys Sone is born this nygt ;  
*In excelsis gloria.'*

- Thys king <sup>6</sup> ys comyn to save [man]kynde,  
 In the Scriptur <sup>7</sup> as we fynde ;  
 Therefore this song have we in mynde :  
 20 *In excelsis gloria.*

Then, Lord, for thy gret[e] grace,  
 Graunt us the blys to se thy face,  
 Where we may syng to thy solas :  
*In excelsis gloria.*

<sup>1</sup> saints<sup>2</sup> dwell<sup>3</sup> they<sup>4</sup> noble<sup>5</sup> shepherds<sup>6</sup> MS. keng (em. Chambers and Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*)<sup>7</sup> MS. as yn Scripturas (em. C. and S.)

## AT CHRISTMAS, MAID MARY

About 1425. Sections 6 and 7 (lines 59–84) of *Festivals of the Church*, from MS. Brit. Mus. Royal 18 A. 10, printed by Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood* (E.E.T.S. 46), pp. 212–3.

At Cristemasse, mayde Mary,  
 þorowe helpe of þe Holy Goostis heste,<sup>1</sup>  
 þi Brid<sup>2</sup> was born, and lay þe by,  
 Aboute boþe bynne<sup>3</sup> and beeste.  
 þe aungels maden melody 5  
 For joye of Cristis feeste;  
 A clere note þei sang in þe sky  
 Whan Kyngis Sone bare fleissshly creste.<sup>4</sup>  
 Scheperdes, meest and leest,  
 'Joye to God full of love!' 10  
 Herden þei aungels synge above,  
 'Pes to man! þe devyll is drove<sup>5</sup>  
 Fro Goddis trone in þe eest.'

þan myxt þe mylde may<sup>6</sup> synge,  
 Ysaye, þe woord of þee: 15  
 'þou seydest<sup>7</sup> a zerd schulde sprynge  
 Oute of þe rote of jentill Jesse,  
 And schulde floure with florisschyng,  
 With primeroses greet plente;  
 Into þe croppe<sup>8</sup> schulde come a Kyng 20  
 þat is a Lord of power and pyte —  
 My swete Sone I see!  
 I am þe zerde,<sup>9</sup> þou art þe Flour!  
 My Brid<sup>10</sup> is borne by<sup>11</sup> beest in boure;  
 My Primerose, my Paramour,<sup>12</sup> 25  
 With love I lulle þee.'

<sup>1</sup> bidding<sup>2</sup> son (*lit.* bird)<sup>3</sup> manger<sup>4</sup> crest, insignia<sup>5</sup> driven<sup>6</sup> maiden<sup>7</sup> Isa. 11. 1<sup>8</sup> topmost branch<sup>9</sup> shoot<sup>10</sup> child (*lit.* bird)<sup>11</sup> near<sup>12</sup> sweetheart

## I SING OF A MAIDEN

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Fehr in *Herrig's Archiv* 109. 50.

- I syng of a mayden  
 þat is makeles <sup>1</sup>;  
 Kyng of alle kynges  
 To here Sone [s]che <sup>2</sup> ches.<sup>3</sup>  
 5 He cam also <sup>4</sup> styлле  
 þere <sup>5</sup> his moder was  
 As dew <sup>6</sup> in Aprylle  
 þat fallyt on þe gras;  
 He cam also styлле  
 10 To his moderes bowr  
 As dew in Aprille  
 þat fallyt on þe flour;  
 He cam also styлле  
 þere his moder lay  
 15 As dew in Aprille  
 þat fallyt on þe spray;  
 Moder and maydyn  
 Was never non but [s]che <sup>2</sup>;  
 Wel may swych a lady  
 20 Godes moder be.

## LULLAY, MY CHILD

About 1460-1490. From MS. Bodl. Eng. Poet. e. 1, printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Percy Soc. 73), p. 19.

*Lullay, my Child, and wepe no more;  
 Slepe, and be now styll;  
 The King of blys thy Fader ys,  
 As it was hys wyll.*

<sup>1</sup> matchless

<sup>2</sup> MS. che (em. Chambers and Sidgwick)

<sup>3</sup> chose

<sup>4</sup> as

<sup>5</sup> where

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ps. 72. 6

This endrys<sup>1</sup> nygt I saw a sygt<sup>2</sup> —

A mayd a cradyll kepe —

And ever she song, and seyde among :

‘Lullay, my child, and slepe.’

‘I may not slepe, but I may wepe,

5

I am so wo begone ;

Slep I [w]old, butt I am colde,

And clothys have I none.’

Me thougt I hard<sup>3</sup> the Chyld answard,

And to hys moder he sayd :

10

‘My moder der, what do I her,

In cribbe why am I layd ?

I was borne, and layd beforne

Bestys, both ox and asse ;

My moder mild, I am thy Child,

15

But he my Fader was.

Adam’s gylt this man had spylt<sup>4</sup> ;

That sin grevet[h] me sore.

Man, for the her shall I be

Thyrty wynter and mor.

20

Dole<sup>6</sup> is to se, her shall I be

Hang[ed] upon the rode ;

With baleis<sup>6</sup> tobete,<sup>7</sup> my woundes towete,<sup>8</sup>

And zeffe my fleshe to bote.<sup>9</sup>

Here shall I be hanged on a tre,

25

And dye, as it is skyl<sup>10</sup> ;

That I have bougt leese<sup>11</sup> wyll I nougt ;

It is my Faders will.

<sup>1</sup> other

<sup>2</sup> MS. sygth

<sup>3</sup> heard

<sup>4</sup> ruined

<sup>5</sup> MS. dole it

<sup>6</sup> scourge

<sup>7</sup> smitten

<sup>8</sup> dripping

<sup>9</sup> atonement

<sup>10</sup> proper, right

<sup>11</sup> lose ; MS. lesse

A spere so scharp shall perse my herte  
 For dedys that I have done ;  
 Fader of grace, wher <sup>1</sup> thou hase  
 Forgetyn thy lytyll Sonne ?

5           Withouten pety <sup>2</sup> her shall aby,<sup>3</sup>  
             And mak my fleshe all blo.<sup>4</sup>  
 Adam, iwys, this deth it ys  
             For the and many mo.'

### THE SHEPHERD UPON A HILL HE SAT

About 1500 (or earlier). From MS. Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by Flügel in *Angl.* 26. 243-5 (cf. *Neueng. Lesebuch*, pp. 117-9), with *h* for MS. *y*. See 554 24 ff.

*Can I not syng but ' Hoy !'*  
 10               *Whan the joly shepard made so mych joy.*

The shepard upon a hill he satt ;  
 He had on hym his tabard <sup>5</sup> and his hat,  
 Hys tarbox, his pype, and hys flagat <sup>6</sup> ;  
 Hys name was called Joly, Joly Wat,  
 15           For he was a gud herdesboy.  
                     Ut hoy !  
             For in hys pype he made so mych joy.

The shepard upon a hill was layd ;  
 Hys doge to hys gyrdyll was tayd.<sup>7</sup>  
 20           He had not slept but a lytyll brayd <sup>8</sup>  
             But <sup>9</sup> *Gloria in excelsis* was to hym sayd.  
                     Ut hoy !  
             For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

<sup>1</sup> whether  
<sup>2</sup> pity  
<sup>3</sup> expiate  
<sup>4</sup> livid

<sup>5</sup> loose upper garment with-  
     out sleeves  
<sup>6</sup> flask, bottle  
<sup>7</sup> tied

<sup>8</sup> while ; MS. broyd (em. F.)  
<sup>9</sup> when

The shepard [up]on a hill he stode ;  
 Rownd about hym his shepe they yode.<sup>1</sup>  
 He put hys hond under hys hode,<sup>2</sup>  
 He saw a star as rede as blod.

Ut hoy !

5

For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

' Now farwell, Mall, and also Will,  
 For my love go ye all styll  
 Unto<sup>3</sup> I cum agayn you till<sup>4</sup> ;  
 And evermore, [W]ill,<sup>5</sup> ryng well thy bell.

10

Ut hoy ! '

For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

' Now must I go per<sup>6</sup> Cryst was borne ;  
 Farewell, I cum agayn to-morn<sup>7</sup> ;  
 Dog, kepe well my shep fro þe corn,  
 And warn well warroke<sup>8</sup> when I blow my horn.

15

Ut hoy ! '

For in hys pipe he made so mych joy.

Whan Wat to Bedlem cum[en] was,  
 He swet — he had gon faster than a pace<sup>9</sup> ;  
 He fownd Jesu in a sympyll place,  
 Betwen an ox and an asse.

20

Ut hoy !

For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

The shepard sayd anon ryght :  
 ' I will go se yon farly<sup>10</sup> syght,  
 Wheras þe angell syngith on hight,<sup>11</sup>  
 And the star þat shynyth so bryght.

25

Ut hoy ! '

For in [his]<sup>12</sup> pipe he made so mych joy.

30

<sup>1</sup> went

<sup>2</sup> hood (to lift it up)

<sup>3</sup> until

<sup>4</sup> to

<sup>5</sup> em. F.

<sup>6</sup> where

<sup>7</sup> to-morrow

<sup>8</sup> (?)

<sup>9</sup> walk

<sup>10</sup> wondrous

<sup>11</sup> high

<sup>12</sup> em. F.

'Jesu, I offer to the here my pype,  
My skyrte,<sup>1</sup> my tarbox, and my scrype<sup>2</sup>;  
Home to my felowes now will I skype,  
And also loke unto my shepe.

5

Ut hoy !'

For<sup>3</sup> in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

'Now farewell, myne owne herdesman, Wat !'

'Ye, for God, lady, even so I hat<sup>4</sup>;

Lull well Jesu in thy lape,

10

And farewell, Joseph, wyth thy rownd cape.

Ut hoy !'

For in hys pipe he mad so myche joy.

Now may I well both hope<sup>5</sup> and syng,

For<sup>3</sup> I have bene a[t] Crystes beryng<sup>6</sup>;

15

Home to my felowes now wyll I flyng.<sup>7</sup>

Cryst of hevyn to his blis us bryng !

Ut hoy !'

For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

## JUDAS

About 1300 (*New Eng. Dict.* s.v. *plate*). From MS. Camb. Trin. Coll. B. 14-39 (photograph in my possession); cf. Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 23. The manuscript has *y* for *þ* and *-st(e)* for *-gt(e)*; it is otherwise carelessly written (*wid* for *wiþ*, *wou* for *hou* (?)), etc., but I have made very few emendations, though one is tempted to change *aros* to *aras*, for instance.

Mirk (about 1400 ?) says (*Festial*, E.E.T.S., Ex. Ser. 96, p. 79): 'Judas had befor slayne his owne fadyr, and bylayn hys owne modyr.'

Hit wes upon a Scere þorsday þat ure Loverd aros ;

20

Ful milde were þe wordes he spec to Judas :

<sup>1</sup> (?) ; MS. scrype (em. Flügel)

<sup>4</sup> am called

<sup>6</sup> birth

<sup>2</sup> scrip ; MS. skyrte (em. Flügel)

<sup>5</sup> hop

<sup>7</sup> rush

<sup>3</sup> MS. ffor

19. *Scere þorsday*: Maundy Thursday; Mirk explains (*Festial*, p. 125): 'In old fadyrs dayes, men wold þat day make scher hom honest, and dodde hor heddys, and clyp hor berdys, and so make hom onest aʒeynes Astyr-day. For, on the morow, þay wold do hor body non ese, but suffyr penance yn mynd of hym þat suffred so hard for hom'; cf. p. 169.



'Judas, þou most to Jurselem, oure mete for to bugge<sup>1</sup>;  
Þritti platen<sup>2</sup> of selver þou bere upo þi rugge.<sup>3</sup>

Þou comest fer i<sup>4</sup> þe brode stret, fer i þe brode strete;  
Summe of þine tunesmen þer þou meigt imete.<sup>5</sup>'

Imette wid is soster,<sup>6</sup> þe swikele<sup>7</sup> wimon.

5

'Judas, þou were wrþe<sup>8</sup> me<sup>9</sup> stende<sup>10</sup> þe wid ston,

[Judas, þou were wrþe me stende þe wid ston,]  
For þe false prophete þat tou bilevest upon.'

'Be stille, leve soster, þin herte þe tobreke<sup>11</sup>!

Wiste<sup>12</sup> min Loverd,<sup>13</sup> Crist, ful wel he wolde be wreke.<sup>14</sup>'

10

'Judas, go þou on þe roc, heie upon þe ston;  
Lei þin heved i my barm,<sup>15</sup> slep þou þe anon.'

Sone so<sup>16</sup> Judas of slepe was awake,  
Þritti platen of selver from hym weren itake.

He drou<sup>17</sup> hymselfe bi þe cop,<sup>18</sup> þat al [h]it lavede<sup>19</sup> a<sup>20</sup> blode; 15  
þe Jewes out of Jurselem awenden<sup>21</sup> he were wode.

Foret<sup>22</sup> hym com þe riche Jeu þat heigte<sup>23</sup> Pilatus.

'Wolte sulle<sup>24</sup> þi Loverd, þat hette<sup>25</sup> Jesus?'

'I nul<sup>26</sup> sulle my Loverd for nones cunnes eigte,<sup>27</sup>

Bote hit be for þe þritti platen þat he me bitaigte.<sup>28</sup>'

20

<sup>1</sup> buy

<sup>2</sup> Wyclif has "plates," Matt.  
26. 15, etc.

<sup>3</sup> back

<sup>4</sup> in

<sup>5</sup> meet

<sup>6</sup> sister

<sup>7</sup> treacherous

<sup>8</sup> deserving

<sup>9</sup> (that) one

<sup>10</sup> stoned

<sup>11</sup> break, subj.

<sup>12</sup> if . . . knew (it)

<sup>13</sup> lord

<sup>14</sup> avenged

<sup>15</sup> lap

<sup>16</sup> as soon as

<sup>17</sup> drew

<sup>18</sup> head

<sup>19</sup> was bathed

<sup>20</sup> in

<sup>21</sup> thought

<sup>22</sup> forth

<sup>23</sup> was called

<sup>24</sup> wilt thou sell

<sup>25</sup> is called

<sup>26</sup> will not

<sup>27</sup> no kind of property

<sup>28</sup> entrusted

' Wolte sulle þi Lord, Crist, for enes cunnes golde ?'  
 ' Nay, bote hit be for þe platen þat he habben wolde.'

In him<sup>1</sup> com ur Lord gon, as [h]is postles seten at mete.  
 ' Wou<sup>2</sup> sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete ?

5 [Wou sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete ?]  
 Ic am ibougt ant isold to-day for oure<sup>3</sup> mete.'

Up stod him Judas : ' Lord, am I þat ?  
 I nas never o þe stude<sup>4</sup> þer me<sup>5</sup> þe evel spec.<sup>6</sup>'

Up him stod Peter, ant spec wid al is migte :  
 10 ' þau<sup>7</sup> Pilatus him come wid ten hundred cnigtes,

[þau Pilatus him com wid ten hundred cnigtes,]  
 Yet Ic wolde, Loverd, for þi love figte.'

' Still þou be, Peter ! wel I þe icnowe<sup>8</sup> ;  
 þou wolt fursake me þrien<sup>9</sup> ar þe coc him crowe.'

### ST. STEPHEN AND HEROD

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Child,  
*Ballads*, No. 22.

15 Seynt Stevene was a clerk in Kyng Herowdes halle,  
 And servyd him of bred and cloþ,<sup>10</sup> as every kyng befallē.

Stevyn out of kechone cam, wyth boris hed on honde ;  
 He saw a sterre was fayr and brygt over Bedlem stonde.

<sup>1</sup> refl.

<sup>2</sup> how (is it that) ; or read wi ?

<sup>3</sup> your

<sup>4</sup> place

<sup>5</sup> any one

<sup>6</sup> spake

<sup>7</sup> though

<sup>8</sup> know

<sup>9</sup> thrice

<sup>10</sup> tablecloth

7. þat : Mätzner (*Altengl. Sprachproben* I. 114) suggests *wrech* after this word ; but would the *c* of *spec* be palatal ?

He kyst<sup>1</sup> adoun þe boris hed, and went into þe halle.

'I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle.

'I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle;  
þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beten þan we alle.'

'Quat eylyt<sup>2</sup> þe, Stevene? quat<sup>3</sup> is þe befalle? 5  
Lakkyt<sup>4</sup> þe eyþer mete or drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle?'

'Lakit me neyþer mete ne drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle;  
þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beten þan we alle.'

'Quat eylyt þe, Stevyn? art þu wod,<sup>5</sup> or þu gynnyst to brede<sup>6</sup>? 10  
Lakkyt þe eyþer gold or fe, or ony ryche wede<sup>7</sup>?'

'Lakyt me neyþer gold ne fe, ne non ryche wede;  
þer is a chyld in Bedlem born xal<sup>8</sup> helpyn us at our nede.'

'þat is al so soþ, Stevyn, al so soþ, iwys,  
As þis capoun crowe xal þat lyþ here in myn dysh.'

þat word was not so sone seyde, þat word in þat halle, 15  
þe capoun crew *Cristus natus est!* among þe lordes alle.

'Rysyt<sup>9</sup> up, myn turmentowres, be to<sup>10</sup> and al[s]<sup>11</sup> be on,  
And ledyt Stevyn out of þis town, and stonyt hym wyth ston!'

Tokyn he<sup>12</sup> Stevene, and stonyd hym in the way,  
And perfore is his evyn<sup>13</sup> on Crystes owyn day. 20

<sup>1</sup> cast  
<sup>2</sup> ails  
<sup>3</sup> what  
<sup>4</sup> fails  
<sup>5</sup> mad

<sup>6</sup> be pregnant (?)  
<sup>7</sup> garment  
<sup>8</sup> shall  
<sup>9</sup> rise (imp.)  
<sup>10</sup> by two

<sup>11</sup> also  
<sup>12</sup> they took  
<sup>13</sup> eve, vigil

## CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO VENUS

*Troilus and Criseyde* 3. 1-14, which is translated from Boccaccio's *Filostrato* 3. 585-600 :

O luce eterna, il cui lieto splendore  
Fa bello il terzo ciel, dal qual ne piove  
Piacer, vaghezza, pietade ed amore ;  
Del sole amica, e figliuola di Giove,  
Benigna donna d' ogni gentil core,  
Certa cagion del valor che mi muove  
A' sospir dolci della mia salute,  
Sempre lodata sia la tua virtute.

Il ciel, la terra, lo mare e l' inferno  
Ciascuno in sè la tua potenza sente,  
O chiara luce ; e s' io il ver discerno,  
Le piante, i semi, e l' erbe puramente,  
Gli uccei, le fiere, i pesci con eterno  
Vapor ti senton nel tempo piacente,  
E gli uomini e gli dei, nè creatura  
Senza di te nel mondo vale o dura.

For an extended comment, see my article, *Herrig's Archiv* 119 (1907). 40-54.

O blisful light, of whiche the bemes clere  
Adorneth al the thridde hevene<sup>1</sup> faire ;  
O sonnes leef, O Joves doughter dere,  
Plesaunce of love, O goodly, debonaire,<sup>2</sup>  
5 In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire ;  
O verray cause of hele<sup>3</sup> and of gladnesse,  
Yheried<sup>4</sup> be thy might and thy goodnesse !  
  
In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see  
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne ;  
10 As man, brid, best, fish, herbe, and grene tree  
Thee fele in tymes with vapour<sup>5</sup> eterne.  
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne<sup>6</sup> ;  
And in this world no lyves<sup>7</sup> creature,  
Withouten love, is worth, or may endure.

<sup>1</sup> that of Venus  
<sup>2</sup> gracious  
<sup>3</sup> well-being

<sup>4</sup> praised, exalted  
<sup>5</sup> inspiration

<sup>6</sup> forbid  
<sup>7</sup> living

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO THE TRINITY

*Troilus and Criseyde* 5. 1863-1869. The first three lines are from Dante, *Paradiso* 14. 28-30:

Quell' uno e due e tre che sempre vive,  
E regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,  
Non circonscriitto, e tutto circonscrive.

Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne onlyve,<sup>1</sup>  
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,  
Uncircumscrip't, and al mayst circumscriue,  
Us from visible and invisible foon  
Defende; and to thy mercy, everychoon,  
So make us, Jesus, for thy grace digne,<sup>2</sup>  
For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne!

5

<sup>1</sup> in life, living

<sup>2</sup> worthy

## PLAYS

### THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

This fragmentary 'interlude,' belonging to the thirteenth century, is the first English comedy, and the only one extant from the Middle Ages. It was printed by Wright from a manuscript then in private hands, but now MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 23,986, written about 1300 by a French scribe. A more critical edition is by Heuser (*Anglia* 30. 306-19). According to the latter, the dialect indicates south Yorkshire or north Lincolnshire; as there is mention in *Dame Sirith* (see above, p. 145) of Boston, in Lincolnshire, the two works belong to the same region, though the manuscript of *Dame Sirith* hails from Worcester. Heuser assumes that both works rest upon a lost interlude. He concludes:

1. *Dame Sirith* was originally written in rhyming couplets.
2. *Dame Sirith* has only 47 narrative lines (24 of these at the beginning) out of 450, and these occur almost exclusively when a new character enters; everything indicates that it was an interlude before it was a fabliau.
3. *Dame Sirith* and our interlude are akin in subject, dramatic character, verse, dialect, and occasionally in phraseology; hence both repose upon a thirteenth-century interlude.
4. Various changes of the original appear in *Dame Sirith* (narrative additions, verse, dialect), so that our interlude does not spring from the fabliau. In the interlude the deceived woman is a girl, not, as in every other version, a wife; hence the fabliau does not spring from the present interlude. It is likely that each author worked, not from a manuscript, but from his own recollection of the acted interlude.

5. The names throw no light upon a possible French origin. For (a) as the scribe was French (Heuser, p. 310), the saints, Michel and Dinis, signify nothing; (b) Mome Elwis and Malkyn are English names; the Margeri of *Dame Sirith* is French, but must have been used in England; the Willekin of *Dame Sirith* is English; Sirith is Scandinavian (= Sigrith); the Nelde of *Dame Sirith* is hardly a proper name, but possibly from OE. *eald*, old. Elwis, or Helwys, points to the eastern part of England, where there occur such family-names as Helwys and Elwes.

With respect to Heuser's (5), the indications are that behind the *Clericus et Puella* there was a French original. Malkyn has a termination borrowed from Dutch or Low German, but the first syllable is from the French Matilda (note that the wife of Henry I changed her original name of Eadgyth, Edith, to Matilda). Mone (MS. Mome) is borrowed from Scandinavian or Dutch. The other names point clearly to France: to the saints, Michael and Denis, add

Leonard (cf. above, p. 387), who is associated with the vicinity of Limoges; and Elwis is surely the French Heluis (Helois, Heluiz, Helui, Heloi, Eluys), which is frequently found in the French feudal epic before 1180 — thirteen times in *Garin le Lorrain*, for instance (Langlois, *Table des Noms Propres dans les Chansons de Geste*, pp. 329–30); compare Chaucer's 'Helowys' in *Wife of Bath's Prologue* 677, referring to the mistress of Abelard. Then *fayllard*, 477 8 (following its noun), is French, like the *boinard* of *Dame Sirith* (152 19). As to *Dame Sirith*, the name Margeri is French, as we have seen; Willekin has the same ending as Malkyn; and Nelde (rather, nelde) represents a variant spelling of 'needle' (the one crone may have ostensibly supported herself with her needle, as the other with her distaff).

Compare the *Debate of the Cleric and the Maiden*, pp. 418–20, above.

The interlude begins: *Hic incipit Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, and these names are retained throughout the stage-directions; I have substituted *Cler.* and *Maid.* I have also supplied the headings for the scenes, and made several emendations.

The manuscript commonly represents initial *þ* (and occasionally *ȝ*) by *y*; I have restored the original forms. It also confounds *w* and *v*, supplies and omits *h* at random, etc.

## SCENE I

MAIDEN'S *home.* Enter CLERIC and MAIDEN

*Cler.* Damisel,<sup>1</sup> reste wel!

*Maid.* Sir, welcum, by Saynt Michel!

*Cler.* Wer es ty<sup>2</sup> sire? Wer es ty dame?

*Maid.* By Gode, es noþer<sup>3</sup> her at hame.

*Cler.* Wel wor suilc a man to life,

þat suilc a may mihte<sup>4</sup> have to wyfe<sup>5</sup>!

*Maid.* Do way, by Crist and Leonard!

No wil Y lufe na clerc fayllard<sup>6</sup>;

Na kep<sup>7</sup> I herbherg<sup>8</sup> clerc in huse no<sup>9</sup> y<sup>10</sup> flore,<sup>11</sup>

Bot<sup>12</sup> his hers<sup>13</sup> ly wituten<sup>14</sup> dore.

Go forth þi way, god sire,

For<sup>15</sup> her hastu losyt<sup>16</sup> al þi hire.<sup>17</sup>

5

10

1 MS. damishel

2 thy (t for th, as elsewhere)

3 neither

4 MS. mithe

5 Cf. 145 7–8

6 deceitful

7 care

8 to harbor

9 nor

10 on

11 Cf. 145 27

12 unless

13 rump

14 outside the

15 MS. ff., and always below as initial

16 MS. losye; cf. 147 5

17 MS. wile; cf. *Childhood of Jesus* 1384 (ca. 1300) in Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, 1875: 'Elles we leosez boþe ore gwile and huyre.'

- Cler.* Nu, nu, by Crist and by Sant Jhon,  
 In al pis land ne wist I none,  
 Mayden, þat Hi luf mor þan þe;  
 Hif me nicht ever þe better <sup>1</sup> be!  
 5 For þe Hy sory <sup>2</sup> nicht and day;  
 Y may say, ' Hay, <sup>3</sup> wayleuay! '  
 Y luf þe mar <sup>4</sup> þan mi lif;  
 Þu hates me mar þan gayt <sup>5</sup> dos cnif <sup>6</sup> —  
 Þat es nouȝt <sup>7</sup> for mysȝilt. <sup>8</sup>  
 10 Certes, <sup>9</sup> for þi luf ham Hi spilt. <sup>10</sup>  
 A, suȝte <sup>11</sup> mayden, reu of me, <sup>12</sup>  
 Þat es ty luf, hand ay sal be!  
 For þe luf of þ[e] mod[er] <sup>13</sup> of hevene, <sup>14</sup>  
 Þu mend þi mode, <sup>15</sup> and her my stevene. <sup>16</sup>  
 15 *Maid.* By Crist of hevene, and Sant Jon <sup>17</sup>!  
 Clerc of scole ne kep <sup>18</sup> I non,  
 For many god wymman haf þai don scam[e] —  
 By Crist, þu michtis haf be <sup>19</sup> at hame <sup>20</sup>!  
*Cler.* Syn <sup>21</sup> it n[on] opir <sup>22</sup> gat <sup>23</sup> may be,  
 20 Jesu Crist <sup>24</sup> bytech <sup>25</sup> Y þe,  
 And send[e] <sup>26</sup> neulic <sup>27</sup> bot <sup>28</sup> tharinne,  
 Þat Y <sup>29</sup> be lesit <sup>30</sup> of al my pine. <sup>31</sup>  
*Maid.* Go nu, truan, <sup>32</sup> go nu, go,  
 For mikel þu canst <sup>33</sup> of sory and wo!

1 MS. bether

2 sorrow

3 alas

4 more

5 goat; MS. yagt (ȝayt?)

6 knife; MS. chuief (em. Heuser)

7 not

8 misdeed

9 MS. certhes

10 undone

11 sweet; MS. suȝthe

12 Cf. 146 12

13 MS. y mod (em. H.)

14 MS. efne

15 Cf. 146 11

16 cry

17 MS. jone

18 care for

19 been

20 Cf. 147 8

21 MS. synt

22 MS. nobir; cf. 480 10

23 way

24 dat.

25 commend; MS. bytethy (em. H.)

26 may he send

27 soon; MS. neulit (em. H.)

28 amendment, help

29 MS. yi

30 freed

31 woe

32 vagabond

33 MS. canstu



## SCENE II

ELWIS' home. *Enter CLERIC and ELWIS*

*Cler.* God te blis,<sup>1</sup> mone<sup>2</sup> Helwis.

*Mone<sup>2</sup> Elwis.* Son, welcum, by San Dinis<sup>3</sup>!

*Cler.* Hic am comin<sup>4</sup> to þe, mone<sup>5</sup>;

þu hel<sup>6</sup> me noht,<sup>7</sup> þu say me sone.

Hic am a clerc þat hauntes<sup>8</sup> scole;

Y led<sup>9</sup> my lif wyt mikel dole<sup>10</sup>;

Me wor lever to be ded<sup>11</sup>

þan led the lif þat Hyc led,<sup>12</sup>

For an<sup>13</sup> mayden wit<sup>14</sup> and schen<sup>15</sup> —

Fayrer ho<sup>16</sup> lond hav<sup>17</sup> Y non sen.<sup>18</sup>

Ȝo<sup>19</sup> hat<sup>20</sup> mayden Malkyn, Y wene —

Nu þu wost quam<sup>21</sup> Y mene;

Ȝo wonys at the tounes ende,

þat suyt lif, so fayr and hende<sup>22</sup>;

Bot-if Ȝo wil hir mod amende,

Neuly Crist my ded me send[e]<sup>23</sup>!

Men send<sup>24</sup> me hyder, wytuten<sup>25</sup> fayle,

To haf þi help an[d] ty cunsayle.<sup>26</sup>

þarfor am Y cummen here,

þat þu salt be my herandbere,<sup>27</sup>

To mac me and þat mayden sayct,<sup>28</sup>

And Hi sal gef þe of myn ayct,<sup>29</sup>

So þat hever, al þi lyf,

Saltu be þe better<sup>30</sup> wyf;

5

10

15

20

<sup>1</sup> bless; cf. 148 4

<sup>2</sup> aunt; MS. mome (see note 5)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 148 10

<sup>4</sup> come

<sup>5</sup> MS. mome (mone rhymes with sone, 'soon,' in Gower, *Conf. Am.* i. 97)

<sup>6</sup> conceal

<sup>7</sup> nothing; MS. noth

<sup>8</sup> frequent

<sup>9</sup> lead; MS. lydy

<sup>10</sup> Cf. 148 17-18

<sup>11</sup> MS. dedh

<sup>12</sup> MS. ledh

<sup>13</sup> MS. ay

<sup>14</sup> white; MS. with

<sup>15</sup> beautiful

<sup>16</sup> on, in

<sup>17</sup> MS. haw

<sup>18</sup> MS. syen

<sup>19</sup> she; MS. yo

<sup>20</sup> is named

<sup>21</sup> whom

<sup>22</sup> gracious

<sup>23</sup> opt.

<sup>24</sup> they (one) sent

<sup>25</sup> MS. vyt-

<sup>26</sup> Cf. 149 1-2

<sup>27</sup> messenger

<sup>28</sup> at one; cf. 150 8

<sup>29</sup> property

<sup>30</sup> richer

So help me Crist — and <sup>1</sup> Hy may spede,  
 Riche <sup>2</sup> saltu haf þi mede! <sup>3</sup>

*Mone* <sup>4</sup> *Ellwis*. A, son, wat <sup>5</sup> saystu? Benedicite <sup>6</sup>!

Lift hup þi hand, and blis þe!

5 For it es boyt <sup>7</sup> syn and scam[e]

þat þu on me hafs layt thys blam[e];

For Hic am an ald <sup>8</sup> quyne <sup>9</sup> and a lam[e], <sup>10</sup>

Y led my lyf wit Godis gram[e] <sup>11</sup>;

Wit my roc <sup>12</sup> Y me fede;

10 Can I do non othir dede

Bot my Pater Noster and my Crede <sup>13</sup>

(To say Crist for missedede),

And myn Avy Mary

(For my synnes <sup>14</sup> Hic am sorry),

15 And my *De Profundis*

(For al that yn sin lys);

For can I me non oþir þing, <sup>15</sup>

þat wot Crist, of hevene Kyng. <sup>16</sup>

Jesu Crist, of hevene hey,

20 Gef <sup>17</sup> that þay may heng hey,

And gef þat Hy may se

þat þay be heng on a tre

þat þis ley as leyit <sup>18</sup> me onne, <sup>19</sup>

For aly <sup>20</sup> wyman am I on. <sup>21</sup> . . .

<sup>1</sup> if

<sup>2</sup> richly

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 149 5

<sup>4</sup> MS. mome

<sup>5</sup> MS. vat

<sup>6</sup> *Pron.* bencitee; cf. 149 7

<sup>7</sup> both

<sup>8</sup> old

<sup>9</sup> quean

<sup>10</sup> Cf. 149 10-18

<sup>11</sup> anger; MS. love (em. suggested by H.; cf. *grome*, 149 11)

<sup>12</sup> distaff

<sup>13</sup> Cf. 149 21-28

<sup>14</sup> MS. scynnes

<sup>15</sup> MS. þink

<sup>16</sup> MS. kync

<sup>17</sup> grant

<sup>18</sup> lie have lied

<sup>19</sup> MS. onne me

<sup>20</sup> holy; cf. 149 19

<sup>21</sup> one

## THE CHESTER NOAH'S FLOOD

Even as early as the fourth century, Greek Christian preachers introduced dramatic dialogue into their sermons, no doubt under the influence of the dramatic tradition which had been perpetuated from the classic age; and they were imitated by certain of the Latin Fathers. Such dialogue is found, again, in the *Christ* of the Old English poet, Cynewulf. Thus, before the ritual of the Church developed into the beginnings of the miracle-play, the dramatic element in Scriptural narrative had been accentuated in both the East and the West (Cook, 'A Remote Analogue to the Miracle Play,' in *Jour. Eng. and Germ. Phil.* 4 (1903). 421-51; cf. 5. 62-4).

In the tenth century, the *Concordia Regularis* of St. Æthelwold (A.D. 965-975), in the ceremony for the third nocturn at matins on Easter morning, directs three brethren to represent the women who go to the sepulchre, and one the angel seated at the door of the tomb. As they approach, the angel says: *Quem quæritis in sepulchro, O Christicolæ?* To which the three reply: *Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum.* And he answers: *Non est hic; surrexit, sicut prædixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis,* etc. (Chambers, *Mediæval Stage* 2. 308; cf. Gayley, *Plays of Our Forefathers*, pp. 17-8).

The rise and progress of the miracle-play are well sketched by Jusserand (*Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 456 ff.):

'The imitation of any action is a step towards drama. Conventional, liturgical, ritualistic as the imitation was, still there was an imitation in the ceremony of mass; and mass led to the religious drama, which was therefore, at starting, as conventional, liturgical, and ritualistic as could be. Its early beginning is to be sought for in the antiphoned parts of the service, and then it makes one with the service itself. . . . A great step was made when, at the principal feasts of the year, Easter and Christmas, the chanters, instead of giving their responses from their stalls, moved in the Church to recall the action commemorated on that day; additions were introduced into the received text of the service; religious drama begins then to have an existence of its own. "Tell us, shepherds, whom do you seek in this stable?"—They will answer: "Christ the Saviour, our Lord." Such is the starting-point; it dates from the tenth century; from this is derived the play of Shepherds, of which many versions have come down to us. . . .

'Verse replaced prose; the vulgar idiom replaced Latin; open air and the public square replaced the church nave and its subdued light. It was no longer necessary to have recourse to priests wearing a dalmatic in order to represent midwives; the feminine parts were performed by young boys dressed as women. . . .

'The religious drama was on the way to lose its purely liturgical character when the conquest of England had taken place. Under the reign of the Norman and Angevin kings, the taste for dramatic performances increased considerably; within the first century after Hastings we find them numerous

and largely attended. The oldest representation the memory of which has come down to us took place at the beginning of the twelfth century. . . . A little later in the same century, Fitzstephen, who wrote under Henry II, mentions as a common occurrence the "representations of miracles" held in London. In the following century, under Henry III, some were written in the English language. During the fourteenth century, in the time of Chaucer, mysteries were at the height of their popularity. . . .

'In a more or less complete state, the collections of the Mysteries performed at Chester, Coventry, Woodkirk, and York have been preserved, without speaking of fragments of other series. Most of those texts belong to the fourteenth century, but have been retouched at a later date. Old Mysteries did not escape the hand of the improvers, any more than old churches, where any one who pleased added paintings, porches, and tracery, according to the fashion of the day. . . .

'Once emerged from the Church, the drama had the whole town in which to display itself; and it filled the whole town. On these days the city belonged to dramatic art; each company had its cars or scaffolds, *pageants* (placed on wheels in some towns), each car being meant to represent one of the places where the events in the play happened. The complete series of scenes was exhibited at the main crossings, or on the principal squares or open spaces in the town. . . .

'While in the theatre of Bacchus the tragedies of Sophocles were played once and no more, the Christian drama, remodeled from century to century, was represented for four hundred years before immense multitudes; and this is a unique phenomenon in the history of literature.'

According to Gayley (*op. cit.*, pp. 132-3; cf. pp. 128-31) the Chester cycle, at least in part, was in existence in the first third of the fourteenth century, and its present form probably represents a revision made not far from 1400 (see also Ten Brink, *English Literature* 2.<sup>1274</sup>; Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, pp. xix-xxi; Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, p. xxxvi; Cook, in *Nation* of May 27, 1915, p. 599). The manuscripts, five in number, are, however, much later (1591-1604).

Pollard thus characterizes these plays (p. xxxvii): 'There is less in the Chester plays to jar on modern feelings than in any other of the cycles. The humor is kept more within bounds, the religious tone is far higher.' Of the *Noah's Flood*, Gayley says (p. 151): 'The characters are distinct and consistently developed. The comic episodes are natural and justifiable, for they serve to display, not to distort, character, and they grow out of the dramatic action. They are, moreover, varied, and, to some extent, cumulative.' Chaucer thus alludes to the stubbornness of Noah's wife (*Miller's Tale* 352-7):

'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas, 'also  
The sorwe of Noe with his felawshipe,  
Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe?  
Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,  
At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,  
That she hadde had a ship hirself allone.

Our text is based upon MS. Harl. 2124 (H.), as printed by Deimling (E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. 62. 48-63), with certain stage-directions and variants from MS. Bodley 175 (B.), as contained in Deimling's edition, and from MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 10,305 (W.), as printed by Thomas Wright in 1843. For the Latin names of the characters, *Noe*, etc., I have substituted the corresponding English ones.

There is a duplication of the dumb show of making the ark, of the command to take the beasts by sevens, and of the comic episode of Noah's wife; this looks as though two drafts had been rather clumsily patched together.

There are emendations by Kölbing in *Engl. Stud.* 16. 280; 21. 163.

## CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

## GOD

NOAH	NOAH'S WIFE
SHEM	SHEM'S WIFE
HAM	HAM'S WIFE
JAPHETH	JAPHETH'S WIFE

*First, in some heigh place or in the cloudes, yf it  
may be, GOD speaketh unto NOE, standing  
without the arke, with all his family:*<sup>1</sup>

*God.* I, God, that all the world have wrought,  
Heaven and earth, and all of nought,  
I see my people, in deede and thought,  
Are sett[e] fowle in sinne.

My Ghost shall not lenge<sup>2</sup> in mon<sup>3</sup> —  
That through fleshlie liking is my fone<sup>4</sup> —  
But<sup>5</sup> till vi skore yeares be gone,  
To loke if they will blynne.<sup>6</sup>

5

Manne that I made I will destroy,  
Beast, worme, and fowle to flie,  
For on earthe they doe me n[o]ye<sup>7</sup> —  
The folke that are theron;

10

<sup>1</sup> From B.; the corresponding Latin is in H.

<sup>2</sup> remain (Vulg. *permanebit*)

<sup>3</sup> MS. man; W. mone

<sup>4</sup> foes (plural, because *man* is used collectively)

<sup>5</sup> except

<sup>6</sup> cease; see Gen. 6. 3, 5

<sup>7</sup> cause me annoyance

Hit harmes me so hartfullie <sup>1</sup> —  
 The malyce that now <sup>2</sup> can <sup>3</sup> multeply —  
 That sore it greveth me inwardlie  
 That ever I made mon.<sup>4</sup>

5 Therefore, Noe, my servant free,  
 That righteous man art, as I see,  
 A shipp sone thou shalt make the,  
     Of trees drye and lighte ;  
 Little chambers therein thou make,  
 10 And bynding slich <sup>5</sup> also thou take ;  
 Within and out thou ne slake <sup>6</sup>  
     To noynte <sup>7</sup> it through thy <sup>8</sup> mighte.<sup>9</sup>

300 cubytes it shall be long,  
 And 50 of breadth,<sup>10</sup> to mak it stronge ;  
 15 Of heighte 30 <sup>11</sup> ; the mete <sup>12</sup> thou fonge,<sup>13</sup>  
     Thus measure it about.  
 One wyndow worch, through thy wytte ;  
 One cubyte of length and breadth <sup>10</sup> make it.  
 Upon the side a dore shall sit,  
 20 For to come in and out.<sup>14</sup>

Eating-places thou make also ;  
 Three-roofed chambers one or two ;  
 For with water I thinke to slowe <sup>15</sup>  
     Man that I can make ;  
 25 Destroyed all the world shal be  
 Save thou, thy wife, thy sonnes three,  
 And all there wives also with thee  
     Shall saved be for thy sake.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>1</sup> at the heart<sup>2</sup> MS. now that<sup>3</sup> doth<sup>4</sup> MS. manne ; see Gen. 6. 6<sup>5</sup> pitch<sup>6</sup> fail<sup>7</sup> MS. anoynte<sup>8</sup> MS. all thy<sup>9</sup> Gen. 6. 14<sup>10</sup> MS. breadeth<sup>11</sup> MS. 50<sup>12</sup> measure<sup>13</sup> take<sup>14</sup> Gen. 6. 16<sup>15</sup> slay<sup>16</sup> Gen. 6. 16-18

*Noah.* Ah Lord, I thanke the lowd and still,  
That to me art in such will,  
And spares me and my house to spill,<sup>1</sup>

As now I sothlie fynde.  
Thy bydding, Lord, I shall fulfill, 5  
And never more the greeve ne grill,<sup>2</sup>  
That suche grace has sent me till <sup>3</sup>  
Among all mankinde.

Have done, yow men and women all ;  
Helpe, for ought that may befall, 10  
To worke this shipp, chamber and hall,  
As God hath bydden us doe.

*Shem.* Fader,<sup>4</sup> I am already bowne <sup>5</sup> ;  
Anne axe I have, by my crowne <sup>6</sup> !  
As sharpe as any in all this towne, 15  
For to goe thereto.

*Ham.* I have a hatchet wonder kene,  
To byte well, as may be seene ;  
A better grownden, as I weene, -  
Is not in all this towne. 20

*Japheth.* And I can well make a pyn,  
And with this hammer knock yt in ;  
Goe and worche without more dynne ;  
And I am ready bowne.

*Noah's Wife.* And we shall bring tymber to, 25  
For wee nothing els mon <sup>7</sup> doe ;  
Women be weake to underfoe  
Any great travayle.

*Shem's Wife.* Here is a good hackstock <sup>8</sup> ;  
On this yow maye hew and knock ; 30

<sup>1</sup> destroy  
<sup>2</sup> offend  
<sup>3</sup> to me

<sup>4</sup> MS. father  
<sup>5</sup> prepared  
<sup>6</sup> head

<sup>7</sup> may ; MS. mon nothing els  
<sup>8</sup> chopping-block

Shall non be idle in this flock,  
Ne now may no man fayle.

*Ham's Wife.* And I will goe to gather sliche,  
The ship for to caulke <sup>1</sup> and piche ;  
5 Anoynt <sup>2</sup> yt must be every stich —  
Board, tree, and pyn.

*Japheth's Wife.* And I will gather chippes here,  
To make a fire for yow in feere,<sup>3</sup>  
And for to dight[e] <sup>4</sup> your dynner,  
10 Against [that] yow come in.<sup>5</sup>

*Then NOVE begineth to builde the arcke; and  
speaketh NOVE:* <sup>6</sup>

*Noah.* Now, in Gods name,<sup>7</sup> I will begin  
To make the shippe that we shall in,<sup>8</sup>  
That we be ready for to swym  
At the cominge of the flood.

15 These bordes I joyne here togeder,<sup>9</sup>  
To kepe us safe from the wedder;  
That we may row both hider <sup>10</sup> and thider,  
And safe be from this floode.

Of this tree will I make the mast,  
20 Tyde with cables <sup>11</sup> that will last,  
With a sayleyarde for each blast,  
And each thinge in ther kinde ;  
With topcastle and bowspreet,<sup>12</sup>  
With coardes and ropes, I have all meete  
25 To sayle forth at the next weete <sup>13</sup> ;  
This shipp is at an ende.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. cleane (em. W.)

<sup>2</sup> MS. anoynted; em. suggested by Deimling

<sup>3</sup> all (*lit.* in company)

<sup>4</sup> make ready

<sup>5</sup> MS. adds: Tunc faciunt  
signa quasi laborarent  
cum diversis instru-  
mentis

<sup>6</sup> From W.

<sup>7</sup> MS. the name of God

<sup>8</sup> inhabit

<sup>9</sup> MS. -gether

<sup>10</sup> MS. hither

<sup>11</sup> MS. gables; W. cabbelles

<sup>12</sup> MS. bewsprytt; cf. OE. *sprēot*

<sup>13</sup> wet, rain

<sup>14</sup> MS. adds: Tunc Noe iterum,  
cum tota familia, faciunt  
signa laborandi cum di-  
versis instrumentis



Wife, in this castle we shall be kepte<sup>1</sup>;

My childer and thou I wold<sup>2</sup> in lepte.<sup>3</sup>

*Noah's Wife.* In faith, I<sup>4</sup> had as lief thou slepte,<sup>5</sup>

For all thy Frankish<sup>6</sup> fare<sup>7</sup>;

I will not doe after thy red[e].<sup>8</sup>

5

*Noah.* Good wife, doe now as I the bede<sup>9</sup>!

*Noah's Wife.* By Christ, not or<sup>10</sup> I see more neede,

Though thou stand all day<sup>11</sup> and stare!

*Noah.* Lord, that women be crabbed aye,

And never are meke, that dare I saye!

10

This is wel sene by me to-daye,

In witnes of yow each one.

Good wife, let be all this beere<sup>12</sup>

That thou makes in this place here;

For all they wene thou art master —

15

So art thou,<sup>13</sup> by St. John!

*Then NOYE with all his familie shall make a signe  
as though the[y] wroughte upon the shippe with  
diveres instrumentes, and after that GOD shall  
speake to NOYE, sayinge*<sup>14</sup>:

*God.* Noe, [now] take thou thy meanye,<sup>15</sup>

And in the shippe hye<sup>16</sup> that thou<sup>17</sup> be,

For none so righteous man to me

Is now on earth lyvinge.

20

Of cleane beastes with thee thou take

Seaven and seaven or thou slake<sup>18</sup>;

Hee and shee, make<sup>19</sup> to make,

Belyve<sup>20</sup> in that<sup>21</sup> thou bringe.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. keped; W. kepte

<sup>2</sup> would (I would that my children, etc.)

<sup>3</sup> MS. leaped; W. lepte

<sup>4</sup> MS. Noe I; em. suggested by Deimling

<sup>5</sup> MS. sleppit; W. slepte

<sup>6</sup> French

<sup>7</sup> behavior

<sup>8</sup> counsel

<sup>9</sup> MS. bydd; cf. OE. *bēoðan*

<sup>10</sup> before, till

<sup>11</sup> MS. the day; W. day

<sup>12</sup> clamor

<sup>13</sup> MS. and so thou art

<sup>14</sup> From W.; cf. note 2 on p. 489

<sup>15</sup> company

<sup>16</sup> hasten

<sup>17</sup> MS. yow

<sup>18</sup> stop

<sup>19</sup> mate

<sup>20</sup> at once

<sup>21</sup> see that

<sup>22</sup> Gen. 7. 1

Of beastes uncleane two and two,  
 Male and female, without moe<sup>1</sup>;  
 Of cleane fowles seaven alsoe,  
     The hee and shee togeder<sup>2</sup>;  
 5 Of fowles uncleane two,<sup>3</sup> and no more,  
 As I of beastes said before,  
 That shal be saved throughe my lore,  
     Against I send the wedder.<sup>4</sup>

Of all meates that must be eaten  
 10 Into the ship loke there be gotten,  
 For that no way may be forgotten<sup>5</sup>;  
     And doe all this bydeene,<sup>6</sup>  
 To sustayne man and beast therein  
 Aye till the water cease and blyn<sup>7</sup>;  
 15 This world is filled full of synne,  
     And that is now well sene.

Seaven dayes be yet coming —  
 You shall have space them in to bringe;  
 After that is my lyking<sup>8</sup>  
 20      Mankinde for to n[o]ye;  
 40 dayes and 40 nightes  
 Rayne shall fall for ther unrightes,<sup>9</sup>  
 And that I have made through my mightes  
     Now think I to destroye.<sup>10</sup>

25 *Noah.* Lord, to thy<sup>11</sup> byddinge I am bayne<sup>12</sup>;  
 Seinge<sup>13</sup> non other grace will gayne,  
 Hit will I fulfill fayne,  
     For gracious I thee fynde.

<sup>1</sup> more<sup>2</sup> MS. -gether<sup>3</sup> But cf. Gen. 7. 3<sup>4</sup> MS. wedder<sup>5</sup> MS. -yeten; W. -getten<sup>6</sup> straightway<sup>7</sup> stop; see Gen. 6. 21<sup>8</sup> purpose<sup>9</sup> iniquities<sup>10</sup> Gen. 7. 4<sup>11</sup> MS. at your (em. W.)<sup>12</sup> willing<sup>13</sup> MS. sith (em. W.)

A 100 wynters and 20  
This shipp making taried have I,  
If through amendment any mercye  
Wolde fall unto mankinde.

Have done, you men and women all ; 5  
Hye you lest this water fall —  
That<sup>1</sup> each beast were in his stall,  
And into the ship broughte.  
Of cleane beastes seaven shal be,  
Of uncleane two — this God bade me ; 10  
This floode is nye, well may we see,  
Therefore tary you noughte.

*Then NOYE shall goe into the arke with all his family, his wief except, and the arke must be borded rounde about, and one the bordes all the beastes and fowles hereafter receaved must be painted, that thes wordes may agree with the pictures.<sup>2</sup>*

*Sher.* Syr, here are Lyons, libardes in,  
Horses, mares, oxen, and swyne,  
Geates, calves, sheepe, and kine,  
Here sitten thou may see.

*Ham.* Camels, asses, men may finde,  
Bucke [and] doe, harte and hynde;  
And beastes of all manner kinde  
Here bene, as thinkes mee.

*Japheth.* Take here cattles, dogges<sup>8</sup> to,  
Otter, fox, fulmart<sup>4</sup> also ;

<sup>1</sup> (hasten) that

<sup>2</sup> From B.; the Latin (from H.) runs: Tunc Noe introibit archam, et familia sua dabit et recitabit omnia animalia depicta in cartis,

et, postquam unus quisque  
suam locutus est partem,  
ibit in archam, uxore Noe  
excepta, et animalia de-  
picta cum verbis concor-

dare debent; et sic incipiet primus filius

<sup>8</sup> MS. cattes and doggs;  
W. cattes, dogges

4 polecat

Hares, hopping, gaylie can goe —  
Have cowle<sup>1</sup> here for to eate.

*Noah's Wife.* And here are beares, wolfes, sett,  
Apes, owles, marmoset,<sup>2</sup>

5 Weesells, squirrels, and firret<sup>3</sup>;  
Here they eaten their meate.

*Shem's Wife.* Yet more beastes are in this howse:  
Here cattis maken it full crowse<sup>4</sup>;

10 Here a ratten,<sup>5</sup> here a mowse,  
They stand nye togeder.<sup>6</sup>

*Ham's Wife.* And here are fowles les and more:  
Hearnes,<sup>7</sup> cranes, and byttour,<sup>8</sup>  
Swans, peacockes; and them before  
Meate for this wedder.

15 *Japheth's Wife.* Here are cockes, kites, crowes,  
Rookes, ravens — many rowes<sup>9</sup> —

Cuckoes, curlewes — whoever knowes —  
Each one in his kinde;

20 And here are doves, diggs,<sup>10</sup> drakes,  
Redshankes runninge through the lakes;  
And each fowle that ledden<sup>11</sup> makes  
In this shipp men may finde.

*Noah.* Wife, come in! Why standes thou here?

Thou art ever froward — that dare I sweare!

25 Come in, on God's half<sup>12</sup>! Tyme yt were,  
For feare lest that we drowne.

<sup>1</sup> cabbage

<sup>2</sup> monkey

<sup>3</sup> ferret

<sup>4</sup> lively

<sup>5</sup> rat (cf. Fr. *raton*); MS. rotten

<sup>6</sup> MS. .gether

<sup>7</sup> herons

<sup>8</sup> bittern

<sup>9</sup> rows

<sup>10</sup> ducks

<sup>11</sup> language (cf. Chaucer,  
*Squire's Tale* 435,  
478)

<sup>12</sup> for God's sake

*Noah's Wife.* Yea, sir, set up your sayle,  
 And rowe forth with evill hayle,<sup>1</sup>  
 For, without[en]<sup>2</sup> any fayle,  
     I will not out of this towne.

But<sup>3</sup> I have my gossipis everichon, 5  
 One foote further I will not gone;  
 They shall not drowne, by St. John,  
     And<sup>4</sup> I may save their lyfe!  
 They loved me full well, by Christ!  
 But<sup>3</sup> thou wilt let them in thy chist,<sup>5</sup> 10  
 Rowe<sup>6</sup> forth, Noe, whether<sup>7</sup> thou list,  
     And get thee a new wife.

*Noah.* Sem, sonne, loe thy mother is wrow<sup>8</sup>;  
 Forsooth such another I do not know.  
*Shem.* Father, I shall fett her in, I trow, 15  
     Without[en] any fayle. —  
 Mother, my father after thee send,  
 And bydds the into yonder ship wend;  
 Loke up, and se the wynde,  
     For we be readye to sayle. 20

*Noah's Wife.* Sonne, goe again to him, and say  
 I will not come therein to-daye.

*Noah.* Come in, wife, in 20 devills waye!  
 Or els stand there without.

*Ham.* [Father], shall wee all fet her in? 25

*Noah.* Yea, sonnes, in Christ's blessinge and myne!  
 I would yow hyde<sup>9</sup> yow betyme,  
     For of this flood I doubtte.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> success; H. heale

<sup>2</sup> em. from W.

<sup>3</sup> unless

<sup>4</sup> if

<sup>5</sup> ark

<sup>6</sup> MS. els rowe

<sup>7</sup> whither

<sup>8</sup> angry; MS. wraw (em. from W.)

<sup>9</sup> hied

<sup>10</sup> MS. am in doubtte

[*Noah's Wife.*] The flood comes in full fleetinge fast,<sup>1</sup>  
 On every side it spredeth full ferre<sup>2</sup>;  
 For feare of drowning I am agast;  
 Good gossip, let us draw neare,  
 5 And let us drinke or we depart,  
 For oftentimes we have done soe;  
 At<sup>3</sup> a draught thou drinks a quarte,  
 And so will I doe or I goe.<sup>4</sup>

*Japheth.* Mother, we praye you altogeder<sup>5</sup> —  
 10 For we are here your owne childer —  
 Come into the ship, for feare of the wedder,  
 For his love that you boughte<sup>6</sup>!

*Noah's Wife.* That will I not, for all your call,  
 But<sup>7</sup> I have my gossopes all.

15 *Shem.* In feith, mother, yet you shall,  
 Whether you will or not.<sup>8</sup> [*She enters.*]

*Noah.* Welcome, wife, into this boate!

*Noah's Wife.* And have thou that for thy note<sup>9</sup>!  
 [*Gives him a box on the ear.*]<sup>10</sup>

20 *Noah.* A, ha! Mary,<sup>11</sup> this is hote!

It is good to be still!  
 A, children, me thinkes my boate remeves,<sup>12</sup>  
 Our taryng here hugelie me greves;  
 Over the lande the water spredes;  
 God doe as he will!

25 Ah, great God that art so good,  
 That<sup>13</sup> worchis not thie will is wood!  
 Now all this world is on a flood,  
 As I see well in sighte.

<sup>1</sup> This stanza is noted by  
 Hohlfeld as a later addi-  
 tion (*Anglia* 11. 270)

<sup>2</sup> MS. fare (em. K.)

<sup>3</sup> MS. for at (em. K.)

<sup>4</sup> B., W. add:

Here is a pottell of Malmesey  
 good and stronge;

It will rejoy[c]e both hart and  
 tong;

Though Noy thinke us never  
 so long,

Yet wee will drinke alyke.

<sup>5</sup> MS. -gether

<sup>6</sup> redeemed

<sup>7</sup> unless

<sup>8</sup> H. adds: Tunc ibit

<sup>9</sup> pains (*lit.* benefit); MS.  
 mote; em. from W.

<sup>10</sup> For the Latin (H.): Et  
 dat alapam vita

<sup>11</sup> marry

<sup>12</sup> moves

<sup>13</sup> that which, he who

This window I will shut anon,  
 And into my chamber will I gone,  
 Till this water, so greate one,  
 Be slaked <sup>1</sup> through the mighte.

*Then shall NOYE shutte the wyndowe of they  
 arcke, and for a littill space be silent, and  
 afterwarde lokinge rounde aboute shall saye<sup>2</sup>:*

Now 40 dayes are fullie gone, 5  
 Send a raven I will anone,  
 If oughtwhere <sup>3</sup> earth, tree, or stone,  
 Be drye in any place;  
 And if this foule come not againe,  
 It is a signe, soth to sayne, 10  
 That drye it is on hill or playne,<sup>4</sup>  
 And God hath done some grace.

*Then he shall send forth the raven, and, taking  
 a dove in his hand, shall say<sup>5</sup>:*

Ah, Lord! wherever this raven be,  
 Somewhere is drye, well I see,  
 But yet a dove — by my lewtye <sup>6</sup>! — 15  
 After I will sende.  
 Thou wilt turne againe to me,  
 For of all fowles that may flye,<sup>7</sup>  
 Thou art most meke and hend.<sup>8</sup>

*Then he shall send forth the dove, and there shall  
 be in the ark another dove, which shall be let*

<sup>1</sup> abated

<sup>2</sup> From W.; the Latin (H.) runs: Tunc Noe claudet fenestram archæ, et per modicum spatium infra tectum cantent psalmum 'Save mee, O God' [prob-

ably Ps. 69], et aperiens fenestram et respiciens anywhere; perhaps for oughwhere, variant of owhere

<sup>4</sup> Gen. 8. 6, 7

<sup>5</sup> Translated from H.: Tunc

dimittet corvum, et, capiens columbam in manibus, dicat

<sup>6</sup> loyalty, faith

<sup>7</sup> Here a line seems to have dropped out

<sup>8</sup> gentle; cf. Gen. 8. 8

*down from the mast by a cord into the hands  
of NOAH; and afterward NOAH shall say*<sup>1</sup>:

Ah, Lord! blessed be thou aye,  
That hast me comfort<sup>2</sup> thus to-day  
By this sight; I may well saye,  
This flood beginnes to cease;

5 My sweete dove to me brought hase  
A branch of olyve from some place;  
This betokeneth God has done us grace,<sup>3</sup>  
And is a signe of peace.<sup>4</sup>

Ah, Lord, honoured most thou be!  
10 All earthe dryes, now I see,  
But yet tyll thou comaunde me  
Hence will I not hye.  
All this water is awaye;  
Therefore, as sone as I maye,  
15 Sacryfice I shall doe, in faye,<sup>5</sup>  
To thee devoutlye.<sup>6</sup>

*God.* Noe, take thy wife anone,  
And thy children every one;  
Out of the shippe thou shalt gone,  
20 And they all with thee;  
Beastes, and all that can flie,  
Out anone they shall hye,  
On earth to grow and multeplye;  
I will that yt soe be.<sup>7</sup>

25 *Noah.* Lord, I thanke the through thy mighte;  
Thy bidding shall be done in height,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translated from H.: Tunc  
emittet columbam, et erit  
in nave alia columba, fe-  
rens olivam in ore, quæ  
demittetur [MS. quam de-  
mittet] ex malo per funem

in manus Noe; et postea  
dicat Noe  
<sup>2</sup> comforted  
<sup>3</sup> MS. some grace  
<sup>4</sup> Gen. 8. 11

<sup>5</sup> faith

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 8. 20

<sup>7</sup> MS. be soe (sm. K.);  
cf. Gen. 8. 16, 17

<sup>8</sup> with speed



And, as fast as I may dighte,<sup>1</sup>  
     I will doe the honoure,  
 And to thee offer sacrifice;  
 Therefore comes,<sup>2</sup> in all wise,  
 For of these beastes that bene hise  
     Offer I will this stower.<sup>3</sup> 5

*Then, going out from the ark with his whole  
 family, he shall take with him his animals  
 and birds, and shall offer them and slay.<sup>4</sup>*

Lord God in majesty,  
 Thou<sup>5</sup> such grace hast graunted me,  
 Where all was lorne, save<sup>6</sup> to be;  
     Therefore now I am bowne, 10  
 My wife, my childer, my meanye,<sup>7</sup>  
 With sacrifice to honoure thee;  
 With beastes, fowles, as thou may see,  
     I offer here right sone.<sup>8</sup>

*God.* Noe, to me thou arte full able,<sup>9</sup> 15  
 And thy sacrifice acceptable;  
 For I have fownd thee trew and stable,  
     On the now must I myn<sup>10</sup>:  
 Warry<sup>11</sup> earth will I no more  
 For mans synne that greves me sore, 20  
 For, of<sup>12</sup> youth, man full yore  
     Has byn enclyned to syn[n]e.<sup>18</sup>

You shall now grow and multepley,  
 And earth, againe, you edefie<sup>14</sup>;  
 Each beast, and fowle that may flie, 25  
     Shall be a frayd of you;

<sup>1</sup> make ready

<sup>2</sup> imp. plur.

<sup>3</sup> store

<sup>4</sup> Translated from H.: Tunc  
 egrediens archam cum  
 tota familia sua, accipiet

animalia sua et volucres,  
 et offeret ea et mactabit

<sup>5</sup> MS. that

<sup>6</sup> safe

<sup>7</sup> nom.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Gen. 8. 20

<sup>9</sup> pleasing, compliant

<sup>10</sup> be mindful

<sup>11</sup> curse

<sup>12</sup> from

<sup>18</sup> Gen. 8. 21

<sup>14</sup> build up

And fishe in sea, that may flete,<sup>1</sup>  
 Shall susteyne yow, I yow behete<sup>2</sup>;  
 To eate of them yow ne lete<sup>3</sup>  
 That cleane bene you may knowe.<sup>4</sup>

5 Thereas<sup>5</sup> you have eaten before  
 Grasse and rootes sith you were bore,  
 Of cleane beastes now, les and more,  
 I geve you leave to eate;  
 Safe<sup>6</sup> bloode and flesh, bothe in feare,<sup>7</sup>  
 10 Of<sup>8</sup> wrong-dead carren<sup>9</sup> that is here;  
 Eates not of that in no manere,  
 For that aye you shall let[e].<sup>10</sup>

Manslaughter also you shall flee,  
 For that is not pleasant to me;  
 15 That<sup>11</sup> shedes bloode, he or shee,  
 Oughtwhere amongst mankinne,<sup>12</sup>  
 That blood foule sheede shal be,  
 And venge[a]nce have, that men shall se;  
 Therfore beware now all[e] yee,  
 20 You fall not in that synne.<sup>13</sup>

A forwarde<sup>14</sup> now with thee<sup>15</sup> I make,  
 And all thy seede for thy sake,  
 Of suche vengeance for to slake,  
 For now I have my will.  
 25 Here I behet the a heaste<sup>16</sup> —  
 That man [ne] woman, fowle ne beaste,  
 With water, while the world shall l[e]ast[e],<sup>17</sup>  
 I will [them] no more spill.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> float, swim; MS. flytte<sup>2</sup> promise; MS. -hite<sup>3</sup> refrain, forbear; MS. lett<sup>4</sup> that you may know to be clean;

Gen. 9. 1-3; cf. 7. 2; 8. 20

<sup>5</sup> whereas<sup>6</sup> save<sup>7</sup> together; Gen. 9. 4<sup>8</sup> Miswritten for 'or'?<sup>9</sup> carrion; see Lev. 22. 8<sup>10</sup> leave<sup>11</sup> whoever<sup>12</sup> MS. -kinde; em. suggested by Pollard<sup>13</sup> Gen. 9. 5, 6<sup>14</sup> covenant<sup>15</sup> MS. thie<sup>16</sup> promise<sup>17</sup> em. K.<sup>18</sup> destroy; Gen. 9. 9-11

My bowe betwene you and me  
 In the firmament shall bee,  
 By verey token, that you may see  
     That such vengeance shall cease;  
 That man ne woman shall never more  
     5 Be wasted by water, as was<sup>1</sup> before<sup>2</sup>;  
 But for syn, that greveth me sore,  
     Therfore this vengeance wes.<sup>3</sup>

Where cloudes in the welkin bene,  
 That ilke bowe shall be sene,  
     10 In tokeninge that my wrath and tene  
     Shall never thus<sup>4</sup> wroken be;  
 The stringe is turned toward you,  
 And toward me is bent the bowe,  
 That such wedder shall never showe;  
     15 And this behett I thee.<sup>5</sup>

My blessing now I geve the here,  
 To thee, Noe, my servant dere,  
 For vengeance shall no more appeare;  
     20 And now farewell, my darling deere.<sup>6</sup>

## THE BROME PLAY OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Lucy Toulmin Smith, the first editor (in 1884) thus characterizes the play, in comparison with the five others on the same subject (*Anglia* 7. 332): 'On the whole, the Brome version now printed is superior to those above described in the touches of child-nature, and in the play of feeling skillfully shown — the dear coquetting between the love of his child and the committal of the deed by the obedient but agonized father. The child begging his father not to kill him, and his fear of the sword even after all danger is over, . . . are touched in with a life not found elsewhere. The thought of the mother . . . breaks out in the most natural and affecting manner, . . . and the joyful rebound of emotion after the painful strain between duty and affection, expressing itself in the kisses of Abraham and the apostrophes of Isaac to the "gentle sheep,"

<sup>1</sup> MS. is<sup>4</sup> MS. this<sup>6</sup> W. adds:<sup>2</sup> Gen. 9. 12-15<sup>5</sup> Gen. 9. 16

*Finis. Deo gracias! per me, George Bellin, 1592.*  
*Come, Lorde Jesu, come quick'lye.*

<sup>3</sup> MS. was (em. K.)

must have warmly appealed to the hearts of the audience. Finally, the lesson of faith for "learned and lewed" and "the wisest of us all" is taught by the "Doctor" in the simplest manner.'

Gayley thinks this the third miracle-play in order of time, the first being *The Harrowing of Hell* (ca. 1250), and the second, *Jacob and Esau* (ca. 1280). He says (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 126): 'The Brome play of *Abraham and Isaac*, which comes next in order of production, is undoubtedly the basis of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* in the Chester cycle, and probably in an earlier version dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century.' A particularly close parallel is that between 506 3-6 and the Chester play 289-92 (ed. Deimling, p. 76):

If I have trespassed in any degree,  
With a yard you maye beate me;  
Put up your sword, if your will be,  
For I am but a childe.

The play has been three times printed — by Miss Smith as above (A.), by Lady Kerrison and Miss Smith in 1886 (B.), and by Manly in 1897 (M.); Pollard has reproduced lines 316-435 (*English Miracle Plays*, Appendix IV), following Miss Smith.

The unique manuscript (1470-1480) takes its name from the village of Brome, in Suffolk, two miles north of Eye. Brome was from the fourteenth century the seat of the Cornwallis family, to which belonged the Lord Cornwallis who was conspicuous in the American Revolution.

The two editions directly from the manuscript differ here and there in their readings; of the readings I have rejected I have taken no account. Important emendations have been made by Miss Smith, Holthausen (*Anglia* 13 (1891). 361-2), and Manly (*Spec. Pre-Shak. Drama* 1. 41-57). I have been tempted to further efforts at restoration by the remark of Miss Smith (*Anglia* 7. 322-3): 'Judging by the analogy of other plays of the kind, it is probable that this also was originally composed with much care for its poetical form, but has become partially corrupt through oral repetition and the errors of copyists.' All the emendations not attributed to S., H., or M. are by myself; some are perhaps rather daring, but it is easy to revert to the manuscript-readings. Stage-directions (following a bracket) have been supplied partly from S. and M.; two or three are found in the manuscript, in Latin.

Miss Smith remarks (*Anglia* 7. 322): 'With regard to the versification, the reader will observe that it is irregular: in several places the lines run in clear stanzas of five lines, riming abaab; in others it appears to be in stanzas of eight lines, riming alternately, with a frequent short line or tag following. There are also many lines which seem to be formless as regards metre, rime, or stanza.' Accordingly the indications of stanzaic form are often somewhat obscured in this play.

I have modernized in the stage-directions the names of certain characters, for the sake of consistency — *Deus* to *God*, *The Angell* to *Angel*, *Ysaac* to *Isaac*.

## SCENE I

*A field near ABRAHAM'S home in Beersheba**Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC*

*Abraham.* Fader of hevyn omnipotent,  
 With all my hart to the I call;  
 Thow hast goffe <sup>1</sup> me both lond and rent,<sup>2</sup>  
 And my lyvelod thow hast me sent;  
 I thanke the evermore <sup>3</sup> of all. 5

Fyrst off <sup>4</sup> the erth þou madyst Adam,  
 And Eve also to be hys wyffe;  
 All other creatures of them too <sup>5</sup> cam;  
 And now thow hast grant <sup>6</sup> to me, Abram,<sup>7</sup>  
 Her in thys lond to lede my lyffe. 10

In my age þou hast grantyd me thys,  
 That thys gowng chyld with me shall wone <sup>8</sup>;  
 I love nothyng so myche, iwysse,  
 Except pi <sup>9</sup> selffe, der Fader of blysse,  
 As Ysaac her, my owyne swete sone. 15

I have dyverse chyldryn moo,  
 The wych I love not halffe so wyll <sup>10</sup>;  
 Thys fayer swet chyld he chereys <sup>11</sup> me soo  
 In every place wer that I goo,  
 That noo dessece <sup>12</sup> her may I fell.<sup>13</sup> 20

And therfor, Fadyr of hevyn, I prey <sup>14</sup>  
 For hys helth, and also for hys grace;

<sup>1</sup> given<sup>2</sup> income<sup>3</sup> MS. heyly euermore<sup>4</sup> of<sup>5</sup> two<sup>6</sup> granted<sup>7</sup> MS. Abraham<sup>8</sup> dwell<sup>9</sup> MS. thin owyne; see  
next line<sup>10</sup> well; pronounced wail<sup>11</sup> MS. scherys<sup>12</sup> discomfort<sup>13</sup> feel<sup>14</sup> MS. the prey

Now, Lord, kepe hym both nyght<sup>1</sup> and day,  
 That never dessese nor noo [af]fray<sup>2</sup>  
 Cume to my chyld in noo place.

Now cum on, Ysaac, my owyne swet chyld;  
 5 Goo we hom, and take owr rest.

*Isaac.* Abraham, myne owyne fader so myld,  
 To folowe zow I am full prest,<sup>3</sup>  
 Bothe erly and late.

*Abraham.* Cume on, swete chyld, I love the best  
 10 Of all the chydryn that I<sup>4</sup> begat. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

*Heaven. Enter GOD and an ANGEL*

*God.* Myn angell, fast hey<sup>5</sup> the thy wey,  
 And to<sup>6</sup> medyll erth anon pou goo;  
 Abra[ha]ms hart now wyll I asay,  
 Wether that he be stedfast or noo.

15 Sey I commaw[n]dyd hym for to take  
 Ysaac, hys sonne,<sup>7</sup> þat he love[s] so wyll,  
 And with hys blood sacryfyce he make,  
 Ony<sup>8</sup> off my freynchepe [yf] he wyll fell.<sup>9</sup>

Schow hym the wey onto<sup>10</sup> the hylle  
 20 Wer that hys sacryffyce schall be.  
 I schall asay now hys good wyll,  
 Whether he lovyth<sup>11</sup> better hys chyld or me.

All men schall take exampyll be hym  
 My commawmentes how they schall kepe. [*Exeunt.*]

<sup>1</sup> MS. nygth<sup>2</sup> fright, terror<sup>3</sup> ready; MS. glad (em. H.)<sup>4</sup> MS. ever I<sup>5</sup> haste<sup>6</sup> unto; MS. on to<sup>7</sup> MS. zowng sonne, cf.

501 24

<sup>8</sup> MS. yffe ony<sup>9</sup> MS. ffell<sup>10</sup> unto<sup>11</sup> MS. lovyd (em. M.)

## SCENE III

*A field near ABRAHAM'S home. Enter ABRAHAM*

*Abraham.* Now, Fader of hevyn, þat formyd all thyng,  
 My preyerer I make to the aȝeyn,  
 For thys day my tender offryng  
 Here must I ȝeve to the, certeyn.

A! Lord God, allmyty Kyng, 5  
 Wat maner best<sup>1</sup> woll make þe most fayn?  
 Yff I had therof very knyng,<sup>2</sup>  
 Yt schuld be don with all my mayne<sup>3</sup>

Full sone by me.<sup>4</sup>  
 To don thy plesyng on an hyll, 10  
 Verely yt ys my wyll,  
 Dere Fader, God in Trinite.

*Enter ANGEL*

*Angel.* Abraham, Abraham, wyll þou rest!  
 Owr Lord comandyth þe for to take  
 Ysaac, thy ȝowng sone, that thou lovyst best, 15  
 And with hys blod sacryfyce þat thou make.

Into the lond of v[i]syon<sup>5</sup> thou goo,  
 And offer thy chyld onto thy Lord;  
 I schall the lede and schow allsoo.  
 Unto Goddes hest, Abraham, acord, 20  
 And folow me upon thys grene.

*Abraham.* Wollecom<sup>6</sup> to me be my Lordes sond,<sup>7</sup>  
 And hys hest I wyll not withstond;  
 Ȝyt Ysaac, my ȝowng sonne in lond,  
 A full dere chyld to me hase<sup>8</sup> bene.<sup>9</sup> 25

<sup>1</sup> beast<sup>2</sup> knowing, knowledge<sup>3</sup> might, strength (cf. 'might  
and main')<sup>4</sup> MS. anone (em. H.)<sup>5</sup> Moriah (Gen. 22, 2); em. H.<sup>6</sup> welcome<sup>7</sup> messenger<sup>8</sup> MS. haue<sup>9</sup> MS. byn

I had lever, yf God had be plesyd,  
 For to a<sup>1</sup> forbore<sup>2</sup> all þe good þat I have,  
 Than Ysaac my sone schuld a be desessyd,<sup>3</sup>  
 So God in hevyn my sowll mot save !

5 I lovyd never thyng soo mych in erde,<sup>4</sup>  
 And now I must the chyld goo kyll.  
 A, Lord<sup>5</sup> ! my conseons ys stron[g]ly sterd,<sup>6</sup>  
 And zyt, my dere Lord, I am sore<sup>7</sup> aferd  
 To groche<sup>8</sup> ony thyng<sup>9</sup> agens thy wyll.

10 I love my chyld as [I love] my lyffe,  
 But zyt I love my God myche more,  
 For thow my hart woold make ony stryffe,  
 Zyt wyll I not spare for chyld nor wyffe,  
 But don after my Lordes lore.<sup>10</sup>

15 Thow I love my sonne never so wyll,  
 Zyt smythe of<sup>11</sup> hys hed sone I schall.  
 A, Fader of hevyn ! to the I knell;  
 An hard dethe my son schall fell,  
 For to honor the, [my] Lord, withall.

20 *Angel.* Abraham ! Abraham ! thys ys wyll seyde,  
 And all thys comamentes loke pou obay<sup>12</sup>;  
 But in thy hart be nothyng dysmayd.<sup>13</sup>

*Abraham.* Nay, nay, I<sup>14</sup> hold me wyll apayd<sup>15</sup>  
 To plesse<sup>16</sup> my God to the best I<sup>17</sup> may,<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> have<sup>2</sup> done without<sup>3</sup> disturbed, put to discomfort, molested<sup>4</sup> MS. erthe (em. M., following S.'s suggestion)<sup>5</sup> MS. Lord God<sup>6</sup> stirred; MS. steryd<sup>7</sup> MS. sere (em. H.)<sup>8</sup> MS. gowr<sup>9</sup> make any complaint<sup>10</sup> instruction<sup>11</sup> smite off<sup>12</sup> MS. loke þat pou kepe (em. suggested by M.)<sup>13</sup> MS. dismasyd; em. M.<sup>14</sup> MS. forsoth I<sup>15</sup> MS. plesyd (M. suggests em.)<sup>16</sup> MS. pelsse<sup>17</sup> MS. þat I<sup>18</sup> MS. haue (M. suggests em.)



For thow my hart be hevely sett

To see the blood of my owyn dere sone,

Ȝyt for all thys I wyll not lett,<sup>1</sup> [*Exit* ANGEL.

But Ysaac, my son, I wyll goo fett,

And cum asse fast as ever we conne.<sup>2</sup> [*Exit.* 5

#### SCENE IV

ABRAHAM'S home. *Enter* ABRAHAM and ISAAC

[*Abraham.*] Now, Ysaac, my owyne son [so] dere,

Wer art thow, chyld? Speke to me.

*Isaac.* My fayer swet fader, I am here,

And make my preyrys to þe Trenyte.

*Abraham.* Rysse up, my chyld, and fast cum heder, 10

My gentyll barn<sup>3</sup> þat art so wysse,

For we to,<sup>4</sup> chyld, must goo togeder,

And onto my Lord make sacryffyce.

*Isaac.* I am full redy, my fader, loo!

Evyn<sup>5</sup> at ȝowr handes I stand ryght<sup>6</sup> here, 15

And watsoever ȝe byd me doo,

Yt schall be don with glad cher,

Full wyll and fyne.

*Abraham.* A! Ysaac, my owyn son soo dere,

Godes blyssyng I ȝyffe the, and myn. 20

Hold thys fagot upon þi bake,

And her myselffe fyer schall bryng.

*Isaac.* Fader, all thys her wyll I packe;

I am full fayn to do ȝowr bedyng.

<sup>1</sup> desist  
<sup>2</sup> MS. can

<sup>3</sup> child  
<sup>4</sup> two

<sup>5</sup> MS. ȝevyn  
<sup>6</sup> MS. rygth

*Abraham.* A, Lord of hevyn! my handes I wryng,  
Thys chyldes wordes all towond<sup>1</sup> my harte.

Now, Ysaac son, goo we owr wey  
Onto gon mownte, with all owr mayn.

5 *Isaac.* Go we, my dere fader, as fast as I may;  
To folow zow I am full fayn,  
Allthow I be slendyr.

*Abraham.* A, Lord! my hart brekyth on tweyn,<sup>2</sup>  
Thys chyldes wordes, they be so tender.

## SCENE V

*Mount Moriah. Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC*

10 A, Ysaac, son! anon ley yt down,  
No lenger upon pi backe yt hold,<sup>3</sup>  
For I must make redy bo[u]n<sup>4</sup>  
To honowr my Lord God as I schold.<sup>5</sup>

15 *Isaac.* Loo, my dere fader, wer yt ys!  
To cher<sup>6</sup> zow allwey I draw me ner;  
But, fader, I mervell sore of thys,  
Wy þat ze make thys hevvy chere;

And also evermore<sup>7</sup> dred I:  
Wer ys zowr best<sup>8</sup> þat ze schuld kyll?  
20 Both fyer and wood we have redy,  
But queke<sup>9</sup> best have we non on pis hyll;

A qwyke best, I wot wyll, must be ded,  
Zowr sacryfyce for to make.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> wound<sup>2</sup> MS. tewyn (em. S.)<sup>3</sup> MS. bere (em. M., following Kittredge's suggestion)<sup>4</sup> prepared<sup>5</sup> MS. schuld<sup>6</sup> cheer<sup>7</sup> MS. fader euermore<sup>8</sup> MS. queke best<sup>9</sup> living<sup>10</sup> MS. transposes this line and the next (em. S.)

*Abraham.* Dred the nowyht,<sup>1</sup> my chyld, I the red<sup>2</sup>;  
Owr Lord wyll send me onto thys sted<sup>3</sup>  
Summ maner a best for to take,  
Throw hys swet sond.

*Isaac.* Ja, fader, but my hart begynnyth to quake  
To se þat scharpe sword in zowr hond.

Wy bere ze zowr sword drawyn soo?  
Off zowre contenauns<sup>4</sup> I have mych wonder.

*Abraham.* A, Fader of hevyn, so<sup>5</sup> I am woo!  
Thys chyld her brekys my harte onsonder.<sup>6</sup> 10

*Isaac.* Tell me, my dere fader, or that ze ses,<sup>7</sup>  
Ber ze zowr sword draw[yn]<sup>8</sup> for me?

*Abraham.* A, Ysaac, swet son, pes! [a,] pes!  
For iwys thow breke[s] my harte on thre.

*Isaac.* Now trewly, sumwat, fader, ze thynke,<sup>9</sup> 15  
That ze morne<sup>10</sup> thus [ay] more and more.

*Abraham.* A! Lord of hevyn, thy grace let synke,  
For my hart was never halffe so sore.

*Isaac.* I preye zow, fader, let<sup>11</sup> me þat wyt,<sup>12</sup>  
Wyther schall I have ony harme or noo. 20

*Abraham.* Iwys, swet son, I may not tell the zyt,  
My hart ys now soo full of woo.

*Isaac.* Dere fader, I prey,<sup>13</sup> hyd yt<sup>14</sup> not fro me,  
But sum of zowr thowt ze<sup>15</sup> tell me [anone].

<sup>1</sup> not at all; MS. -wyth

<sup>2</sup> counsel

<sup>3</sup> place

<sup>4</sup> countenance; MS. conwnauns

<sup>5</sup> MS. os (em. S.)

<sup>6</sup> MS. on too (em. H.)

<sup>7</sup> cease

<sup>8</sup> em. M.

<sup>9</sup> ponder upon

<sup>10</sup> mourn

<sup>11</sup> MS. þat ze wyll let

<sup>12</sup> know

<sup>13</sup> MS. prey zow

<sup>14</sup> MS. hydygth (em. M.)

<sup>15</sup> MS. þat ze

*Abraham.* A, Ysaac, Ysaac, I must kyll the !

*Isaac.* Kyll me, fader? alas, wat have I done?

Yff I have trespassyd agens zow owt,

Ze may make me with a zard<sup>1</sup> full myld,

5 And with zowr scharp sword kyll me nowt,<sup>2</sup>

For iwys, fader, I am but a chyld.

*Abraham.* I am full sory<sup>3</sup> thy blood for to spyll,

But truly, my chyld, I may not chese.<sup>4</sup>

*Isaac.* Now I wold<sup>6</sup> my moder were on<sup>6</sup> pis<sup>7</sup> hyll !

10 Sche woold knele for me on both hyr kneys

To save my lyffe.

And sythyn<sup>8</sup> my moder ys not here,

I prey zow, fader, chonge<sup>9</sup> zowr chere,

And kyll me not with zowyr knyffe.

15 *Abraham.* Forsothe, son, but-gyf I the kyll,

I schuld greve God ryght<sup>10</sup> sore, I drede ;

Yt ys hys commawment and also hys wyll

That I schuld do thys same dede.

He commawdyd me, son, for serteyn,

20 To make my sacryfyce with thy blood.

*Isaac.* And ys yt Goddes wyll þat I schuld be slayn?

*Abraham.* Ja, truly, Ysaac, my son soo good,

And therfor my handes I wryng.

<sup>1</sup> rod ; MS. with a zard ze  
may make me

<sup>2</sup> MS. nogth

<sup>3</sup> MS. sory son

<sup>4</sup> choose

<sup>5</sup> MS. wold to God

<sup>6</sup> MS. her on

<sup>7</sup> A. ys, B. yis (em. M.)

<sup>8</sup> MS. sybyn þat

<sup>9</sup> change ; MS. schonge

<sup>10</sup> MS. rygth

*Isaac.* Now, fader, agens my Lordes decre<sup>1</sup>

I wyll never groche, lowd nor styll ;

He myght<sup>2</sup> a<sup>3</sup> sent me a better destyne<sup>4</sup>

Yf yt had a be hys wyll.<sup>5</sup>

*Abraham.* Forsothe, son, but-yf I do<sup>6</sup> pis dede,

5

Grēvosly dysplessyd owr Lord wyll be.

*Isaac.* Nay, nay, fader, God forbede

That ever ge schuld greve hym for me.

Ze have other chyldryn, on or too,

The wyche ge schuld love wyll be kynd.<sup>7</sup>

10

I prey zow, fader, make ge no woo,

For, be I onys ded and fro zow goo,

I schall be sone owt of zowr mynd.

Therfor doo owr Lordes byddyng,

And wan I am ded, than prey for me ;

15

But, good fader, tell ge my moder nothyng,

Say þat I am dwellyng<sup>8</sup> in another cuntre.<sup>9</sup>

*Abraham.* A, Ysaac,<sup>10</sup> blessyd mot thow be !

My hart begynnyth<sup>11</sup> stron[g]ly to rysse,

To see the blood off thy blyssyd body.

20

*Isaac.* Fadyr, syn yt may be noo other wysse,<sup>12</sup>

Let yt passe over as wyll as I ;

But, or<sup>13</sup> I goo onto my deth,

I prey zow blysse me with zowr hond.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. wyll (em. suggested by M.)

<sup>2</sup> MS. mygth

<sup>3</sup> have

<sup>4</sup> MS. desteny

<sup>5</sup> MS. plecer (em. suggested by M.)

<sup>6</sup> MS. ded

<sup>7</sup> by nature, naturally

<sup>8</sup> MS. dewlyng (em. S.)

<sup>9</sup> MS. in another cuntre

dewylling

<sup>10</sup> MS. Ysaac, Ysaac

<sup>11</sup> MS. begynnyd (em. M.)

<sup>12</sup> wise

<sup>13</sup> before ; MS. fader or

<sup>14</sup> MS. hand

*Abraham.* Now, Ysaac, [sone,] with all my breth,  
My blyssyng I geve þe upon thys lond,  
And Godes also therto, iwys.

Ysaac, Ysaac, sone, up thow stond,  
5 Thy fayer swete mowthe þat I may kys.

*Isaac.* Now farwyll,<sup>1</sup> my owyne fader so fyn,  
And grete wyll my moder in erde.<sup>2</sup>  
But I prey ȝow, fader, to hyd my eyne,  
That I se not þe stroke of ȝowr scharpe swerd,<sup>3</sup>

10 That my fleysse schall defyle.

*Abraham.* Sone, thy wordes make me to wepe full sore ;  
Now, my dere son Ysaac, speke no more.

*Isaac.* A, my owyne dere fader, werefore ?  
We schall speke togedyr her but a wylle,<sup>4</sup>

15 And sythyn that I must nedys<sup>5</sup> be ded,  
Ȝyt, my dere fader, to ȝow I prey,  
Smythe but fewe<sup>6</sup> strokes at my hed,  
And make an end as sone as ȝe may,  
And tery not to longe.

20 *Abraham.* Thy meke wordes, chyld, make me afray<sup>7</sup> ;  
So ' Welawey ! ' may be my songe,

Excepe al only Godes wyll.

A, Ysaac, my owyn swete chyld,  
Ȝyt kysse me aȝen upon thys hyll !

25 In all thys war[l]d<sup>8</sup> ys non soo myld.

*Isaac.* Now truly, fader, all thys teryyng  
Yt doth my hart but harme ;  
I prey ȝow, fader, make an enddyng.

<sup>1</sup> farewell ; MS. for-

<sup>2</sup> MS. erthe (em. M., following S.'s suggestion)

<sup>3</sup> MS. sword (em. M.)

<sup>4</sup> while, short time

<sup>5</sup> needs ; MS. nedysse

<sup>6</sup> MS. feve (em. M.)

<sup>7</sup> afraid ; MS. afrayed (em. M.)

<sup>8</sup> em. S.

*Abraham.* Cume up, swet son, onto my arme ;

I must bynd thy handes too,  
Allthow thow be never soo myld.

*Isaac.* A, mercy, fader ! wy schuld ge do soo ?

*Abraham.* That thow schuldyst not let,<sup>1</sup> my chyld. 5

*Isaac.* Nay, iwysse, fader, I wyll not let zow ;  
Do on for me zowr wyll,  
And on the purpos that ge have set zow  
For Godes love kepe yt forthe styll.

I am full sory thys day to dey,<sup>2</sup> 10  
But gyt I kepe<sup>3</sup> not my God to greve ;  
Do on zowr lyst<sup>4</sup> for me hard[e]ly,  
My fayer swete fader, I zeffe zow leve.

But, fader, I prey zow evermore,  
Tell ge my moder never a<sup>5</sup> dell<sup>6</sup> ; 15  
Yffe sche wist<sup>7</sup> yt, sche wold wepe full sore,  
For iwysse, fader, sche lovyt[h] me wylle<sup>8</sup> ;

Goddess blyssyng have mot sche<sup>9</sup> !  
Now forwyll, my moder so swete,  
We too be leke<sup>10</sup> no mor to mete. 20

*Abraham.* A, Ysaac, son<sup>11</sup> ! pou makyst me gret,<sup>12</sup>  
And with thy wordes<sup>13</sup> dystempurst<sup>14</sup> me.

*Isaac.* Swete<sup>15</sup> fader, I am sory zow to greve<sup>16</sup> ;  
I cry zow mercy of that I have donne,  
And of all trespasse pat ever I ded meve<sup>17</sup> ; 25  
Now, fader,<sup>18</sup> forgyffe me pat I have donne.  
God of hevyn be with me !

<sup>1</sup> hinder

<sup>2</sup> die

<sup>3</sup> wish, desire

<sup>4</sup> pleasure

<sup>5</sup> MS. no

<sup>6</sup> part of it

<sup>7</sup> knew ; MS. wost

<sup>8</sup> MS. full wylle

<sup>9</sup> MS. mot sche have (em. H.)

<sup>10</sup> are likely

<sup>11</sup> MS. Ysaac, Ysaac

<sup>12</sup> lament, weep ; MS. to gret

<sup>13</sup> MS. wordes thow

<sup>14</sup> troublest

<sup>15</sup> MS. iwysse swete

<sup>16</sup> MS. to greve zow

<sup>17</sup> cause ; MS. meve zow

<sup>18</sup> MS. dere fader

*Abraham.* A, dere chyld, lefe of <sup>1</sup> thy monys!  
In all thy lyffe thow grevyd me never onys;  
Now blyssyd be thow, body and bonys <sup>2</sup>!

Thow hast be to me chyld full good.  
5 But iwysse, <sup>3</sup> thow I morne never so fast,  
Ȝyt must I nedes here at the last  
In thys place sched <sup>4</sup> thy blood.

Therfor, my son, <sup>5</sup> here schall þou lye.  
Onto my warke I must me stede <sup>6</sup>;  
10 I <sup>7</sup> had as leve myselffe to dey,  
Yff God wyll be plecyd wyth my dede,  
And myn owyn body for to offer.

*Isaac.* A, mercy, fader, morne ȝe no more,  
Ȝowr wepyng make[th] <sup>8</sup> my hart [as] sore  
15 As my owyn deth that I schall suffer.

Ȝowr kerche[f] <sup>9</sup> abowt my eyn ȝe wynd.

*Abraham.* So I schall, my swettest chyld in erde.<sup>10</sup>

*Isaac.* Now ȝyt, good fader, have thys in mynd,  
And smyth me not oftyn with ȝowr scharp swerd,<sup>11</sup>  
20 But hastily that yt be sped.<sup>12</sup>

*Here ABRAHAM leyd a cloth on YSAACES face,*  
*thus seying:*

*Abraham.* Now farewyll,<sup>13</sup> my chyld, so full of grace.

*Isaac.* A, fader, fader, torne downward <sup>14</sup> my face,  
For of ȝowr <sup>15</sup> swerd <sup>16</sup> I am ever adred.

<sup>1</sup> leave off, cease

<sup>2</sup> MS. bonys, That ever thow  
were bred and born

<sup>3</sup> MS. iwysse child

<sup>4</sup> MS. sched all

<sup>5</sup> MS. dere son

<sup>6</sup> set myself

<sup>7</sup> MS. iwysse I

<sup>8</sup> em. H.

<sup>9</sup> MS. kerche fader

<sup>10</sup> MS. erthe (em. M., following  
S.'s suggestion)

<sup>11</sup> MS. sword (em. M.)

<sup>12</sup> done quickly

<sup>13</sup> MS. fore-

<sup>14</sup> MS. downward

<sup>15</sup> MS. ȝowr scharpe

<sup>16</sup> MS. sword



*Abraham.* To don thys dede I am full sory,  
But, Lord, thyn hest I wyll not withstond.

*Isaac.* A, Fader of hevyn, to the I crye,  
Lord, reseve me into thy hond.<sup>1</sup>

*Abraham.* Loo, now ys cum the tyme <sup>2</sup> certeyn 5  
That my swerd <sup>3</sup> in hys necke schall bite.<sup>4</sup>  
A, Lord, my hart reysyth therageyn,<sup>5</sup>  
I may not fynd <sup>6</sup> in my harte to smygth —

My hart wyll not now thertoo.  
*Ȝyt* fayn I woold warke my Lordes wyll; 10  
But thys ȝowng innosent lygth so styll,  
I may not fynd <sup>6</sup> in my hart hym to kyll.  
O, Fader of hevyn, what schall I doo?

*Isaac.* A, mercy, fader, wy <sup>7</sup> tery ȝe so,  
And let me ley thus longe on þis hethe? 15  
Now I wold to God þe stroke were doo <sup>8</sup>!  
I prey ȝow,<sup>9</sup> schorte me of <sup>10</sup> my woo,  
And let me not loke thus after <sup>11</sup> my deth.<sup>12</sup>

*Abraham.* Now, hart, wy wilt thow not <sup>13</sup> breke on thre?  
*Ȝyt* schall þ[o]u not make me to God <sup>14</sup> onmyld.<sup>15</sup> 20  
I wyll no lenger let <sup>16</sup> for the,  
For that my God agrevyd wold be;  
Now hoold <sup>17</sup> the <sup>18</sup> stroke, my owyn dere chyld.

*Her ABRAHAM drew hys stroke, and þe ANGELL toke  
the swerd <sup>3</sup> in hys hond soddenly.*

*Angel.* I am an angell, thow mayist se <sup>19</sup> blythe,  
That fro hevyn to the ys sent.<sup>20</sup> 25

<sup>1</sup> MS. hand

<sup>2</sup> MS. the tyme cum

<sup>3</sup> MS. sword

<sup>4</sup> MS. synke (em. H.)

<sup>5</sup> against this

<sup>6</sup> MS. fyndygh; M. fynd yt

<sup>7</sup> why

<sup>8</sup> done

<sup>9</sup> MS. fader I prey ȝow hartely

<sup>10</sup> shorten

<sup>11</sup> wait thus for

<sup>12</sup> MS. degth

<sup>13</sup> MS. wolddyst not thou

<sup>14</sup> MS. my God

<sup>15</sup> ungracious (*lit.* unmild)

<sup>16</sup> tarry

<sup>17</sup> receive

<sup>18</sup> MS. tha

<sup>19</sup> see

<sup>20</sup> MS. senth

Owr Lord thanke[th] the an c sythe<sup>1</sup>  
 For the kepyng of hys commaw[nde]ment.

He knowyt[h] þi wyll and also thy harte,  
 That thou dredyst hym above all thyng;  
 5 And sum of thy hevynes for to departe,<sup>2</sup>  
 A fayr ram gynder<sup>3</sup> I gan brynge;

He standyth teyed, loo, among þe breres.  
 Now, Abraham, amend thy mood,  
 For Ysaac, thy zowng son þat her ys,  
 10 Thys day [thow] schall not sched hys blood;

Goo, make thy sacryfece with zon rame.  
 Now farwyll,<sup>4</sup> blyssyd Abraham,  
 For onto hevyn I goo now hom;

The way ys full gayn<sup>5</sup> [to pace<sup>6</sup>];  
 15 Take up thy son soo free. [Exit.

*Abraham.* A, Lord, I thanke the of thy gret grace!  
 Now am I teyed<sup>7</sup> on dyvers wysse;  
 Arysse up, Ysaac, my sunne,<sup>8</sup> arysse;  
 Arysse,<sup>9</sup> swete chyld, and cum to me.

20 *Isaac.* A, mercy, fader! wy smygth ze nowt<sup>10</sup>?  
 A, smygth on, fader, onys with zowr knyffe.

*Abraham.* Pesse, my swet son,<sup>11</sup> and take no thowt,  
 For owr Lord of hevyn hath grant þi lyffe

Be hys angell now, that pou schalt not dey.<sup>12</sup>

25 *Isaac.* A, fader, full glad than wer I,

<sup>1</sup> a hundred times

<sup>2</sup> banish

<sup>3</sup> yonder

<sup>4</sup> MS. for-

<sup>5</sup> near, straight

<sup>6</sup> pass; em. H.

<sup>7</sup> bound (to God); MS. yeyed

<sup>8</sup> MS. dere sunne

<sup>9</sup> MS. arysse up

<sup>10</sup> MS. not yyt (em. H.)

<sup>11</sup> MS. sir (em. M.)

<sup>12</sup> MS. dey þis day sunne truly

Iwys, fader, I sey, iwys,  
Yf thys tale wer trew !

*Abraham.* An hundryd tymys, my son fayer of hew,  
For joy pi mowth now wyll I kys.

*Isaac.* A, my dere fader, Abraham, 5  
Wyll not God be wroth þat we do thus ?

*Abraham.* Noo, noo ! swet <sup>1</sup> son, for gyn <sup>2</sup> same rame  
He hath sent hether down to us.<sup>3</sup>

Gyn best schall dey here in pi sted,  
In the worþschup <sup>4</sup> of owr Lord alon ; 10  
Goo, fet <sup>5</sup> hym hethyr, my chyld, inded.

*Isaac.* I <sup>6</sup> wyll goo hent <sup>7</sup> hym be the hed,  
And bryng gon best with me anon.

*[Isaac catches the ram.]*

A, scheppe, scheppe, blyssyd mot þou be  
That ever thow were sent down heder ! 15  
Thow schall thys day dey for me,  
In the worchup of the holy Trynyte.  
Now cum fast, and goo we togeder

To my fader in hy <sup>8</sup> ;  
Thow þou be never so jentyll and good, 20  
Gyt had I lever thow schedyst pi blood,  
Iwysse, scheppe, than I.

Loo ! fader, I have browt here full smerte <sup>9</sup>  
Thys jentyll scheppe, and to <sup>10</sup> gow I gyffe ;

<sup>1</sup> MS. swyt

<sup>2</sup> yon

<sup>3</sup> MS.

Noo, noo ! harly, my swyt son,

For gyn same rame he hath us sent

Hether down to us ;

em. suggested by M.

<sup>4</sup> MS. worþschup (em. S.)

<sup>5</sup> fetch

<sup>6</sup> MS. Fader I

<sup>7</sup> seize

<sup>8</sup> in haste; MS. of heven

(em. sugg. by M.)

<sup>9</sup> promptly

<sup>10</sup> MS. hym to

Lord<sup>1</sup> God, I thanke þe with all my hart,  
For I am glad that I schall leve,<sup>2</sup>

And kys onys my dere moder.

5 *Abraham.* Now be ryght<sup>3</sup> myry, my [owyne] swete chyld,  
For thys qwyke best þat ys so myld  
Here I present<sup>4</sup> before all other.

*Isaac.* And I wyll fast begynne to blowe ;  
Thys fyer schall brene<sup>5</sup> a full good sped.<sup>6</sup>  
But, fader, wyll<sup>7</sup> I stowppe downe lowe,  
10 *Ȝe* wyll not kyll me with ȝowr swerd,<sup>8</sup> I trowe ?

*Abraham.* Noo, har[de]ly,<sup>9</sup> swet son, have nō dred,  
My mornyng<sup>10</sup> ys past.

*Isaac.* I<sup>11</sup> woold þat swerd<sup>8</sup> wer in a gled,<sup>12</sup>  
For<sup>13</sup> yt make[th]<sup>14</sup> me full yll agast.

*Here ABRAHAM mad hys offryng, knelyng, and  
seyyng thus :*

15 *Abraham.* Now, Lord God of heven in Trynyte,  
Allmyty God omnipotent,  
My offeryng I make in the worchope of the,  
And with thys qweke best I the present ;  
Lord, reseve thow myn intent,  
20 As [thow]<sup>15</sup> art God, and grownd<sup>16</sup> of owr grace.

[*God speaks from heaven.*

*God.* Abraham, Abraham, wyll<sup>17</sup> mot thow sped,<sup>18</sup>  
And Ysaac, þi ȝowng son the by !

<sup>1</sup> MS. but Lord

<sup>2</sup> live

<sup>3</sup> MS. rygth

<sup>4</sup> MS. schall present

<sup>5</sup> burn

<sup>6</sup> speed ; MS. spyd

<sup>7</sup> while

<sup>8</sup> MS. sword

<sup>9</sup> certainly ; em. M.

<sup>10</sup> mourning

<sup>11</sup> MS. ȝa but I

<sup>12</sup> fire (?) ; MS. glad (em. M.)

<sup>13</sup> MS. for iwys fader

<sup>14</sup> em. suggested by H.

<sup>15</sup> em. M.

<sup>16</sup> foundation, source

<sup>17</sup> well

<sup>18</sup> prosper

Truly, Abraham, for thys dede  
 I schall multiplye zowr bother<sup>1</sup> sede  
 As thyke as sterres be in the skye,

Bothe more and lesse ;  
 And as thyke as gravell in the see, 5  
 So<sup>2</sup> multiplyed zowr sede schall be ;  
 Thys grant I zow for zowr goodnesse.

Off zow schall cume frowte gret [won],<sup>3</sup>  
 And ever be in blysse withowt[en] end.<sup>4</sup>  
 For ze drede me as God alon, 10  
 And kepe my commawmentes everych<sup>5</sup> on,  
 My blyssyng I zeffe, wersoever ze wend.<sup>6</sup>

*Abraham.* Loo, Ysaac, my son, how thynke ze  
 Be thys warke that we have wrought<sup>7</sup> ?  
 Full glad and blythe we may be, 15  
 Agens Gods wyll<sup>8</sup> þat we grucched nott  
 Upon thys fayer heth.<sup>9</sup>

*Isaac.* A, fader, I thanke owr Lord every dell  
 That my wyt servyd me so wyll  
 For to drede God more than my deth.<sup>10</sup> 20

*Abraham.* Why ! dereworþy<sup>11</sup> son, wer thow adred ?  
 Hardely,<sup>12</sup> chyld, tell me thy lore.<sup>13</sup>

*Isaac.* Ȝa, be my feyth, fader, now have<sup>14</sup> I red,<sup>15</sup>  
 I was never soo afrayd before  
 As I have byn at gyn hyll. 25  
 But, be my feyth, fader, I swere  
 I wyll nevermore cume there  
 But yt be agens my wyll.

<sup>1</sup> of you both ; MS. zowres botheres

<sup>2</sup> MS. so thyke

<sup>3</sup> plenty ; em. M.

<sup>4</sup> MS. zynd

<sup>5</sup> MS. everysch

<sup>6</sup> MS. goo (em. H.)

<sup>7</sup> MS. wroth

<sup>8</sup> MS. þe wyll of God

<sup>9</sup> MS. hetth

<sup>10</sup> MS. detth

<sup>11</sup> precious ; MS. -wordy

<sup>12</sup> boldly, unhesitatingly

<sup>13</sup> story, what is in thy mind

<sup>14</sup> MS. hath (em. M.)

<sup>15</sup> my senses

*Abraham.* Cum<sup>1</sup> on with me, my owyn swet sonn,  
And homward fast now let us goon.

*Isaac.* Be<sup>2</sup> my feyth, fader, therto I on,<sup>3</sup>  
I had never so good wyll hom to gon,<sup>4</sup>  
5 And to speke with my dere moder.

*Abraham.* A! Lord of hevyn, I thanke the,  
For now may I led hom with me  
Ysaac, my gownge sonn so fre,  
The gentyllest chyld above all other<sup>5</sup> —  
10 Thys may I wyll avo[w to th]ee.<sup>6</sup>

Now goo we forthe, my blyssyd sonn.

*Isaac.* I grant, fader, and let us gon,  
For, be my trowthe, wer I at home,  
I wold never gon owt under that forme.<sup>7</sup>  
15 I pray God geffe us grace evermo,  
And all tho<sup>8</sup> that we be holdyng<sup>9</sup> to. [*Exeunt.*]

## EPILOGUE

### *Enter* DOCTOR

*Doctor.* Lo, sovereyns and sorys,<sup>10</sup> now have we schewyd<sup>11</sup>  
Thys solom story<sup>12</sup> to grete and smale;  
It ys good lernyng to lernd and lewyd<sup>13</sup>  
20 And þe wysest of us all,

Wythowtyn ony berryng.<sup>14</sup>  
For thys story schewyt[h]<sup>15</sup> gowe [her]<sup>16</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. ga cum

<sup>2</sup> by

<sup>3</sup> consent; MS. grant

<sup>4</sup> MS. to gon hom

<sup>5</sup> MS. erthe (em. S.)

<sup>6</sup> MS. avoece

<sup>7</sup> (?)

<sup>8</sup> those; MS. thow

<sup>9</sup> beholding

<sup>10</sup> sirs

<sup>11</sup> MS. schowyd

<sup>12</sup> MS. story hath schowyd (em. H.)

<sup>13</sup> ignorant

<sup>14</sup> outcry, clamorous protest  
(see *NED.* under *bere*, sb.)

<sup>15</sup> showeth; MS. schoyt

<sup>16</sup> em. M.

How we schuld kepe, to owr po[we]re,<sup>1</sup>  
 Goddes commawments withowt grochyng.

Trowe ge, sores, and <sup>2</sup> God sent an angell [to zow],  
 And commawndyd zow zowr chyld to slayn,<sup>3</sup>  
 Be zowr trowthe, ys ther ony of zow 5  
 That eyther wold groche or stryve therageyn <sup>4</sup>?

How thyngke ge now, sorys, therby?  
 I trow ther be iij, or iijj, or moo.  
 And thys <sup>5</sup> women that wepe sorowfully  
 Whan that hyr chyldryn dey them froo <sup>6</sup> — 10

As nater woll <sup>7</sup> and kynd —  
 Yt ys but folly, I may well avow,<sup>8</sup>  
 To groche azens God or to greve zow,  
 For ge schall never se hym myschevyd,<sup>9</sup> I <sup>10</sup> know,  
 Be lond nor watyr, have thys in mynd; 15

And groche not azens owr Lord God  
 In welth or woo, wether <sup>11</sup> that he zow send,  
 Thow ge be never so hard bestad;  
 For when he wyll, he may yt amend,

Hys comawmentes yf <sup>12</sup> ge kepe with good hart, 20  
 As thys story hath now schewyd <sup>13</sup> zow befor[n]e,<sup>14</sup>  
 And feytheffully serve hym qwyll <sup>15</sup> ge be qvart,<sup>16</sup>  
 That ge may plice God bothe evyn and morne.

Now Jesu, that weryd <sup>17</sup> the crown of thorne,  
 Bryng us all to hevyn blysse!  
 Finis. 25

<sup>1</sup> em. M.

<sup>2</sup> if

<sup>3</sup> MS. to smyth of zowr  
 childes hed (em. H.)

<sup>4</sup> against this

<sup>5</sup> these

<sup>6</sup> die and leave them

<sup>7</sup> MS. woll woll (em. S.)

<sup>8</sup> MS. awooe

<sup>9</sup> afflicted

<sup>10</sup> MS. wyll I

<sup>11</sup> whichever

<sup>12</sup> MS. treuly yf

<sup>13</sup> MS. schowyd

<sup>14</sup> em. H.

<sup>15</sup> while

<sup>16</sup> healthy, sound

<sup>17</sup> MS. weryt

## THE YORK NATIVITY PLAY

The Earl of Ashburnham's manuscript (1430-1440), now MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 35,290, was edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith as *York Plays* (Oxford, 1885). Emendations are by Miss Smith (S.); Holthausen (H.), in Herrig's *Archiv* 85. 413; Kölbing (K.), in *Engl. Stud.* 20. 187. The stage-directions are modern.

The form of the seven-line stanza should be noted: abab<sup>4</sup>c<sup>2</sup>b<sup>4</sup>c<sup>2</sup>.

## SCENE I

*Bethlehem. A stable. Enter JOSEPH and MARY*

*Jos.* Allweldand <sup>1</sup> God in Trinite,

I praye þe, Lord, for thy grete myght,

Unto thy symple servand see,

Here in þis place wher we are pight,<sup>2</sup>

5 Oureself allone;

Lord, graunte us gode herberow <sup>3</sup> þis nyght,

Within þis wone.<sup>4</sup>

For we haue sought both uppe and doune,

Thurgh diverse stretis in þis cite;

10 So mekill pepull is comen to towne,

þat we can nowhare herbered be,

Slike prees <sup>5</sup> it is <sup>6</sup>;

Forsuthe I can no socoure see,

But belde <sup>7</sup> with bestes.<sup>8</sup>

15 And yf we here all nyght abide,

We shall be stormed in þis steede <sup>9</sup>;

þe walles are doune on ilke a side,

þe ruffe is rayned <sup>10</sup> aboven oure hede,

Als have I roo.<sup>11</sup>

20 Say, Marie, doughtir, what is thy rede <sup>12</sup>?

How sall we doo?

<sup>1</sup> almighty

<sup>2</sup> pitched, settled

<sup>3</sup> harbor, shelter

<sup>4</sup> place, dwelling

<sup>5</sup> such a crowd

<sup>6</sup> MS. þer is slike prees

<sup>7</sup> lodge

<sup>8</sup> MS. belde us with þere  
bestes (em. H., K.)

<sup>9</sup> place

<sup>10</sup> wet with rain

<sup>11</sup> rest, peace

<sup>12</sup> counsel



For in grete nede nowe are we stedde,<sup>1</sup>

As þou thyselffe the soth may see,

For here is nowthir cloth ne bedde,

And we are weyke and all werie,

And fayne wolde rest.

5

Now, gracious God, for thy mercie,

Wisse<sup>2</sup> us þe best !

*Mar.* God will us wisse, full wele witt ge,

þerfore, Joseph, be of gud chere,

For in þis place borne will he be

10

þat sall us save fro sorowes sere,<sup>3</sup>

Bothe even and morne.

Sir, witte ge wele þe tyme is nere

Hee<sup>4</sup> will be borne.

*Jos.* þan behoves us bide here stille,

15

Here in þis same place all þis nyght.

*Mar.* Ȝa, sir, forsuth it is Goddis will.

*Jos.* þan wolde I fayne we had sum light,

Whatso befall ;

It waxes myrke<sup>5</sup> unto my sight,

20

And colde withall.

I will go gete us light forthy,<sup>6</sup>

And fewell fande<sup>7</sup> with me to bryng.

[*Exit.*

*Mar.* Allweldand God yow governe and gy,<sup>8</sup>

As he is Sufferayne<sup>9</sup> of all thyng,

25

Fo[r] his grete myght !

And lende me grace to his lovyng

þat I me dight<sup>10</sup> !

Nowe in my sawle grete joie have I,

I am all cladde in comforte clere ;

30

<sup>1</sup> placed

<sup>2</sup> guide, direct

<sup>3</sup> divers, various

<sup>4</sup> when he

<sup>5</sup> dark ; MS. right myrke

<sup>6</sup> therefore

<sup>7</sup> seek

<sup>8</sup> guide

<sup>9</sup> sovereign

<sup>10</sup> prepare

Now will be borne of my body

Both God and Man togedir in feere,<sup>1</sup>

Bliste mott he be!

Jesu, my Son þat is so dere,

5 Now borne is he! — [*MARY worships the child.*]

Hayle, my Lord God! hayle, Prince of pees!

Hayle, my Fadir! and hayle, my Sone!

Hayle sovereyne Sege,<sup>2</sup> all synnes to sesse<sup>3</sup>!

Hayle, God and Man in erth to wonne<sup>4</sup>!

10 Hayle! thurgh whos myht

All þis worlde was first begonne,

Merknes and light.

Sone, as I sugett<sup>5</sup> am of thyne,

Vowchesaffe, swete Sone, [for so] I pray þe,

15 That I myght þe take in armys myne,<sup>6</sup>

And in þis povre wede arraie<sup>7</sup> þe.

Graunte me þi blisse,

As I am thy modir chosen to be

In sothfastnesse.

## SCENE II

*Outside the stable. Enter JOSEPH*

20 *Jos.* A, Lorde! what<sup>8</sup> the wedir is colde!

þe fellest<sup>9</sup> freese<sup>10</sup> þat evere I felyd.

I pray God helpe þam þat is olde,<sup>11</sup>

And namely<sup>12</sup> þam þat is vnwelde,<sup>13</sup>

So may I saie.

25 Now, gud God, þou be my belde,<sup>14</sup>

As þou best may. [*A sudden light shines.*]

<sup>1</sup> together (redundant)

<sup>2</sup> hero

<sup>3</sup> cease

<sup>4</sup> dwell

<sup>5</sup> subject; MS. am sympill  
sugett (K. omits sympill)

<sup>6</sup> MS. þe armys of myne

<sup>7</sup> MS. to araie

<sup>8</sup> how

<sup>9</sup> cruelest

<sup>10</sup> frost

<sup>11</sup> MS. alde

<sup>12</sup> especially

<sup>13</sup> weak

<sup>14</sup> shelter; MS. brilde  
(em. S.)

give a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and  
bear a son, and shall call his name

THE YORK NATIVITY PLAY

521

A, Lord God! what light is þis  
þat comes shynyng þus sodenly?

Immmanuel

I can not saie, als have I blisse.

When I come home unto Marie,

þan sall I spirre.<sup>1</sup>

[Exit. 5

SCENE III

*Within the stable. Enter JOSEPH to MARY*

[Jos.] A! here[d]<sup>2</sup> be God, for nowe come I.

Mar. Ze ar welcum, sirre.

Jos. Say, Marie doghtir, what chere with þe?

Mar. Right goode, Joseph, as has been ay.

Jos. What<sup>3</sup> swete thyng is þat on thy kne?

10

Mar. It is my Sone, þe soth to saye,

þat is so gud.

Jos. Wele is me I bade<sup>4</sup> þis day

To se þis Foode<sup>5</sup>!

Me merveles mekill of þis light,

15

þat þusgates<sup>6</sup> shynes in þis place,

Forsuth it is a selcouth<sup>7</sup> sight!

Mar. Þis hase he ordand<sup>8</sup> of his grace,

My Sone so zing,

A starne<sup>9</sup> to be shynyng a space

20

At his bering.<sup>10</sup>

For Balam tolde ful longe beforne

How þat a sterne shulde rise full hye,<sup>11</sup>

And of a maiden shulde be borne<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ask, inquire

<sup>2</sup> em. K.

<sup>3</sup> MS. O Marie what (em. H.)

<sup>4</sup> awaited

<sup>5</sup> child (*lit.*, one fed)

<sup>6</sup> thus

<sup>7</sup> strange, unusual

<sup>8</sup> ordained

<sup>9</sup> star

<sup>10</sup> birth

<sup>11</sup> Num. 24. 17

<sup>12</sup> Isa. 7. 14

Num. 24. 17. I shall see him, but not now; I shall  
b. and him, and will right: there shall come a Star on  
Moses and Balaam shall rise out of Israel, and

A Sone<sup>1</sup> þat sall oure saffyng<sup>2</sup> be  
 Fro caris kene.  
 Forsuth it is my Sone so free  
 Whame he gan mene.<sup>3</sup>

5       *Jos.* Nowe welcome, Floure fairest of hewe !  
 I shall þe menske<sup>4</sup> with mayne and myght.  
 Hayle, my Maker ! hayle, Crist Jesu !  
 Hayle, riall<sup>5</sup> Kyng, Roote of all right !  
           Hayle, Saveour !  
 10       Hayle, my Lorde, Lemer<sup>6</sup> of light !  
           Hayle, blessid Floure !

*Mar.* Nowe, Lord, þat all þis worlde schall wyne,  
 To þe, my Sone, is þat I saye,  
 Here is no bedde to laye the inne,  
 15       þerfore, my dere Sone, I þe praye,  
           Sen it is so,  
 Here in þis cribbe I myght þe lay  
           Betweene bestis<sup>7</sup> two.

And I sall happe<sup>8</sup> þe, myn owne dere Childe,  
 20       With such clothes as we have here.  
*Jos.* Marie,<sup>9</sup> beholde þes beestis mylde,  
 They make lovyng in ther manere  
           As þei wer men ;  
 Forsothe it semes wele be ther chere<sup>10</sup>  
 25       þare Lord þei ken.<sup>11</sup>

*Mar.* Ther Lorde þai kenne, þat wate I wele —  
 They worshippe hym with myght and mayne.  
 The wedir is colde, as ye may fele ;

<sup>1</sup> MS. sonne<sup>2</sup> salvation<sup>3</sup> mean; MS. be whame Balam  
gon mene (em. H.)<sup>4</sup> worship<sup>5</sup> royal<sup>6</sup> flasher forth<sup>7</sup> MS. þer bestis (em. H., K.)<sup>8</sup> wrap<sup>9</sup> MS. O Marie (em. K.)<sup>10</sup> look<sup>11</sup> know, recognize

To halde <sup>1</sup> hym warme þei are full fayne  
 With þare warme breth,  
 And oondis <sup>2</sup> on hym. Is noght to layne <sup>3</sup>  
 To warme hym with ?

Nowe <sup>4</sup> slepis my Sone, blist mot he be ! 5  
 And lyes full warme þer bestis bytwene.

*Jos.* Nowe <sup>4</sup> is fulfilled, forsuth I see,

þat Abacuc in mynde gon mene,

By <sup>5</sup> prophicie :

He saide oure Savyoure shall be sene 10  
 Betwene bestis lye ;

And nowe I see þe same in sight.

*Mar.* Ȝa, sir, forsuth þe same is he.

*Jos.* Honnoure and worshippe both day and nyght,

Aylastand Lorde, be done to þe, 15  
 As <sup>6</sup> is worthy !

And to <sup>7</sup> thy service I oblissh <sup>8</sup> me  
 With herte <sup>9</sup> holy.

*Mar.* þou mercyfull Maker most myghty,

My God, my Lorde, my Sone so free, 20

Thy handemayden forsoth am I,

And to thi service I oblissh me,

With herte <sup>9</sup> entere.<sup>10</sup>

Thy blissing, [now], beseke I thee,

Graunte <sup>11</sup> us in <sup>12</sup> feere. 25

<sup>1</sup> keep

<sup>2</sup> breathe

<sup>3</sup> borrow

<sup>4</sup> MS. O nowe (em. K.)

<sup>5</sup> MS. and preched by (em. K.)

<sup>6</sup> MS. all way as (em. K.)

<sup>7</sup> MS. lord to (em. K.)

<sup>8</sup> oblige me, bind myself

<sup>9</sup> MS. all myn herte (em. K.)

<sup>10</sup> entire, whole

<sup>11</sup> MS. þou graunte (em. K.)

<sup>12</sup> MS. all in (em. K.)

8. Abacuc: the allusion is to the apocryphal Pseudo-Matthew, chap. 14, which reads: 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Habakkuk the prophet, who said, Between two animals thou art made known.' The reference here is to Hab. 3. 2, where the Septuagint version reads: 'Thou shalt be known between the two living creatures.'

## THE SECOND TOWNELEY SHEPHERDS' PLAY (SECUNDA PASTORUM)

Gayley thus characterizes this piece (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 182): 'The Wakefield *Secunda* . . . is plot within plot, developed through eight closely consecutive scenes, and crowded with action. The comic adventure is indeed but an episode — this "sheep stealing of Mak" — but it has its beginning, middle, and end; the motive, the devices, and the progress of a comedietta in itself. It grows out of and belongs to the conditions with which the enveloping action opens, and its party of the second part are also dramatic persons in the main action. . . . As a work of dramatic genius this little play, with its home-made philosophy, home-made figures, and home-made humor, with its comic business, its sometimes boisterous spirits, its quiet and shrewd irony, its ludicrous diction, its revelation of rural manners, its simple and healthful creed, its radiant and naïve devoutness, its dramatic anticipations, postponements, and surprises, stands out English and alone, and a masterpiece.' The three shepherds he thus describes (pp. 182-3): 'Coll, the first shepherd, who soliloquizes concerning political philosophy, a kind of later fourteenth-century populist whom it refreshes to grumble; . . . Gyb, the second shepherd, whose vein is of matrimonial philosophy; . . . and Daw, the hind, whose philosophy is eclectic, who swears by the unborn Christ and Saint Nicholas, and "lets the world pass." He it is who sees "sudden sights in the darkness"; who warns of the midnight-stalking Mak; who makes that "Yoman" of the king lie safely down between them; it is he, too, who dreams of the stolen sheep, and conducts the vain search therefor; and who, fortunately flinging back to Mak's home to give the hypothetical babe, "that little day starne," a "saxpence," lifts up the clout and diagnoses the fraud that has been practised upon them.' According to Pollard (*English Miracle Plays*, p. 189), Mak is probably adapted from the favorite comic character, the conjurer and buffoon Maugis, of the romance of the *Four Sons of Aymon*. Pollard's general estimate is (England's edition, p. xxx): 'The *Secunda Pastorum* . . . is really perfect as a work of art.'

The play is written, like four others in the Towneley series — *Noah*, *Prima Pastorum*, *Herod*, and the *Buffeting* — and parts of others (cf. Pollard's remarks in England's edition, pp. xxi ff.; Gayley, *op. cit.*, pp. 163 ff.) in a nine-line stanza, rhyming  $aaaa^4b^1ccc^2b^1$ , where the superior numbers denote the number of feet in the line (the a-lines have each four feet, for instance). In reality, however, there are four rhymes to the stanza, instead of three, since each of the a-lines has a rhyme in the middle; the scheme may therefore be represented thus (cf. Pollard, p. xxii):  $ababab^2c^1ddd^2c^1$ . All the stanzas save one (535 14 ff.) are constructed on this model, and that has lost two of the four opening lines.

Not to mention earlier editions, the play was printed in 1897 by England (*The Towneley Plays*, E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser., No. 71, pp. 116-40), and by Manly

(*Spec. Pre-Shak. Drama* 1. 94-119, with a few emendations by Kittredge); in 1909 by Hemingway (*English Nativity Plays*, pp. 188-214); and in part by Pollard (*English Miracle Plays*, pp. 31-43). Emendations by Kölbing are in *Engl. Stud.* 21. 165-6. Modernizations are to be found in Everyman's Library (*Everyman, with Other Interludes*, ed. by Ernst Rhys) and (better) in the Riverside Literature Series (*The Second Shepherds' Play, etc.*, ed. by C. G. Child); the latter has a good bibliographical introduction, pp. 27-8.

The manuscript may be dated about 1460, and the composition of the plays may extend approximately from 1360-1410 (Pollard, in England's edition, pp. xxvii-xxviii). Miss Hope Traver (*Mod. Lang. Notes* 20 (1905). 5) concludes from the use of the word 'crochett' (551 7), introduced into the language before 1400, that the *Secunda Pastorum* was written 'perhaps about 1400 or a little later' (for other references to music see 532 16 ff.; 542 25 ff.; 544 9; 554 24).

The stage-directions are modern. For *Primus Pastor, Uxor*, etc., I have substituted the proper names in the text; thus: *Coll* for *Primus Pastor*; *Gib* for *Secundus (iius) Pastor*; *Daw* for *Tertius (iiiis) Pastor*; *Gill* for *Uxor (eius)*, etc.

## CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

COLL, *the First Shepherd*

GIB, *the Second Shepherd*

DAW, *the Third Shepherd, or rather Gib's servant*

MAK, *the Thief*

GILL, *Mak's Wife*

THE VIRGIN MARY, *with the Child Jesus*

AN ANGEL

## SCENE I

*The moors near Horbury, in the West Riding of Yorkshire*

*Enter COLL, the First Shepherd*

*Coll.* Lord, what these weders<sup>1</sup> ar cold! and I am yll happyd<sup>2</sup>;  
I am nerehand<sup>3</sup> dold,<sup>4</sup> so long have I nappyd;  
My legys thay fold, my fynghers ar chappyd;  
It is not as I wold, for I am al lappyd<sup>5</sup>

In sorow,

<sup>1</sup> weathers, storms  
<sup>2</sup> wrapped, clothed

<sup>3</sup> nearly  
<sup>4</sup> numb

<sup>5</sup> lapped, enveloped

In stormes and tempest —  
 Now in the eest, now in the west.  
 Wo is hym has never rest

Mydday nor morow !

5 Bot we sely<sup>1</sup> husbandys<sup>2</sup> that walkys on the moore,  
 In fayth we are nerehandys outt of the doore.<sup>3</sup>  
 No wonder, as it standys, if we be poore,  
 Ffor the tylthe<sup>4</sup> of oure landys lyys falow as the floore,  
 As ye ken.

10 We ar so lamyd,<sup>5</sup>  
 Ffortaxed<sup>6</sup> and ramyd,<sup>7</sup>  
 We ar mayde handtamyd<sup>8</sup>  
 With<sup>9</sup> thyse gentlery-men.<sup>10</sup>

Thus thay refe<sup>11</sup> us oure rest — oure Lady theym wary<sup>12</sup> !  
 15 These men that ar lord-fest,<sup>13</sup> thay cause the ploghe tary.  
 That<sup>14</sup> men say is for the best, we fynde it contrary ;  
 Thus ar husbandys opprest, in po[i]nte to<sup>15</sup> myscary  
 On lyfe.

Thus hold thay us hunder,  
 20 Thus thay bryng us in blonder<sup>16</sup> ;  
 It were greatte wonder  
 And<sup>17</sup> ever shuld we thryfe.

Ther<sup>18</sup> shall com a swa[y]ne<sup>19</sup> as prowde as a po<sup>20</sup> ;  
 He must borow my wa[y]ne,<sup>21</sup> my ploghe also ;  
 25 Then I am full fa[y]ne<sup>22</sup> to graunt or<sup>23</sup> he go.  
 Thus lyf we in payne, anger, and wo,  
 By nyght and day ;

<sup>1</sup> helpless, miserable

<sup>2</sup> husbandmen (see l. 17) ;  
 MS. shepardes (em. suggested by M.)

<sup>3</sup> nearly homeless

<sup>4</sup> surface (?) (there is arable land among the moors)

<sup>5</sup> MS. hamyd (em. H.)

<sup>6</sup> overtaxed

<sup>7</sup> oppressed

<sup>8</sup> reduced to submission

<sup>9</sup> by

<sup>10</sup> gentry

<sup>11</sup> take from

<sup>12</sup> curse

<sup>13</sup> bound to a lord

<sup>14</sup> what

<sup>15</sup> in peril of ; em. E.

<sup>16</sup> confusion, trouble

<sup>17</sup> if

<sup>18</sup> MS. transposes this stanza and the next (em. K.)

<sup>19</sup> swain

<sup>20</sup> peacock

<sup>21</sup> wagon

<sup>22</sup> MS. swane, wane, fane (em. K.)

<sup>23</sup> ere



He must have if he langyd,<sup>1</sup>  
 If I shuld forgang<sup>2</sup> it,  
 I were better be hangyd  
     Then oones<sup>3</sup> say hym nay.

Ffor may he gett a paynt slefe,<sup>4</sup> or a broche, now-on-dayes,      5  
 Wo is hym that hym grefe, or onys aganesays<sup>5</sup> !  
 Dar no man hym reprefe,<sup>6</sup> what mastery<sup>7</sup> he mays,<sup>8</sup>  
 And yit may no man lefe<sup>9</sup> oone word that he says —  
     No letter.

He can make purveance<sup>10</sup>      10  
 With boste and bragance,<sup>11</sup>  
 And all is thugh maintenance<sup>12</sup>  
     Of men that are gretter.

It dos me good, as I walk thus by myn oone,<sup>13</sup>  
 Of this world for to talk in maner of mone.<sup>14</sup>      15  
 To my shepe wyll I stalk, and herkyn anone,  
 Ther abyde on a balk,<sup>15</sup> or sytt on a stone,  
     Fful soyne<sup>16</sup> ;  
 Ffor I trowe, perde,<sup>17</sup>  
 Trew men if thay be,      20  
 We gett more compane<sup>18</sup>  
     Or it be noyne.<sup>19</sup>

*Enter GIB, the Second Shepherd. He fails to see COLL*

*Gib.* Benste<sup>20</sup> and Dominus ! What may this bemeyne<sup>21</sup> ?  
 Why fares this world thus ? Oft have we not sene ?

<sup>1</sup> desired  
<sup>2</sup> do without  
<sup>3</sup> once  
<sup>4</sup> sleeve embroidered in colors  
<sup>5</sup> contradicts  
<sup>6</sup> reprove  
<sup>7</sup> masterful behavior

<sup>8</sup> makes, shows  
<sup>9</sup> believe  
<sup>10</sup> provision for himself  
<sup>11</sup> bragging  
<sup>12</sup> countenance, backing  
<sup>13</sup> myself  
<sup>14</sup> lamentation

<sup>15</sup> ridge  
<sup>16</sup> soon  
<sup>17</sup> *par Dieu*  
<sup>18</sup> company  
<sup>19</sup> noon  
<sup>20</sup> benedicite  
<sup>21</sup> mean, signify

Lord, thyse winds<sup>1</sup> ar spytus,<sup>2</sup> and the weders<sup>3</sup> full kene,  
And the frostys so hydus<sup>4</sup> thay water myn eeyne —

No ly.<sup>5</sup>

Now in dry, now in wete,

5 Now in snaw, now in slete;  
When my shone<sup>6</sup> freys to my fete,

It is not all esy.

Bot as far as I ken, or yit as I go,

We sely wedmen<sup>7</sup> dre<sup>8</sup> mekyll wo,

10 We have sorow then and then, it fallys oft so.

Sely Capyle, oure hen, both to and fro

She kakyls,

Bot begyn she to crok,

To groyne,<sup>9</sup> or [to clo]k,<sup>10</sup>

15 Wo is hym<sup>11</sup> oure cok,

Ffor he is in the shakyls<sup>12</sup>!

These men that ar wed have not all thare wyll;

When they ar full hard sted,<sup>13</sup> thay sygh full styll;

God wayte<sup>14</sup> thay ar led full hard and full yll;

20 In bower nor in bed thay say noght thertyll

This tyde.

My parte have I fun,<sup>15</sup>

I know my lesson:

Wo is hym that is bun,<sup>16</sup>

25 Ffor he must abyde.<sup>17</sup>

Bot now late in oure lyfys (a mervell to me,

That I thynk my hart ryfys<sup>18</sup> sich wonders to see —

What that destany dryfys it shuld so be!)

Som men wyll have two wyfys, and som men thre

30 In store!

<sup>1</sup> MS. weders (em. suggested by M.)

<sup>2</sup> spiteful

<sup>3</sup> storms

<sup>4</sup> hideous

<sup>5</sup> lie

<sup>6</sup> shoes

<sup>7</sup> See line 17, below

<sup>8</sup> endure, suffer

<sup>9</sup> grumble

<sup>10</sup> em. E.

<sup>11</sup> MS. hym is of (em. suggested by M.)

<sup>12</sup> shackles, bonds of wedlock; MS. shekyls

<sup>13</sup> beset

<sup>14</sup> knows

<sup>15</sup> found

<sup>16</sup> bound

<sup>17</sup> stay as he is

<sup>18</sup> is riven asunder

Som ar wo that has any,  
 Bot so far [as] can<sup>1</sup> I,  
 Wo is hym that has many,  
     Ffor he felys sore.

Bot, yong men, of<sup>2</sup> wowyng, for God that you boght, 5  
 Be well war<sup>3</sup> of wedyng, and thynk in youre thocht:  
 'Had I wyst<sup>4</sup>' is a thyng it servys of noght.  
 Mekyll styll mowrnyng has wedyng home broght,  
     And grefys,  
 With many a sharp showre; 10  
 Ffor thou may cach in an owre  
 That shall [savour]<sup>5</sup> fulle sowre  
     As long as thou lyffys.

Ffor — as ever red I pystyll<sup>6</sup>! — I have oone to my fere<sup>7</sup>  
 As sharp as a thystyll, as rug as a brere; 15  
 She is browyd<sup>8</sup> lyke a brystyll, with a sowre-loten<sup>9</sup> chere<sup>10</sup>;  
 Had she oones wett hyr whystyll, she couth syng full clere  
     Hyr Pater Noster.  
 She is as greatt as a whall<sup>11</sup>;  
 She has a galon of gall; 20  
 By hym that dyed for us all,  
     I wald I had ryn<sup>12</sup> to<sup>13</sup> I had lost hir<sup>14</sup>!

*Coll.* 'God looke over the raw<sup>15</sup>!' Ffull defly<sup>16</sup> ye stand!

*Gib.* Yee, the dewill in thi maw so tariand<sup>17</sup>!

Sagh thou awre<sup>18</sup> of Daw? 25

*Coll.* Yee, on a ley<sup>19</sup> land

Hard I hym blaw. He commys here at hand,

Not far,

<sup>1</sup> know

<sup>2</sup> as to

<sup>3</sup> beware well

<sup>4</sup> known

<sup>5</sup> em. E.

<sup>6</sup> epistle

<sup>7</sup> for my mate

<sup>8</sup> has brows

<sup>9</sup> sour-looking

<sup>10</sup> expression

<sup>11</sup> whale

<sup>12</sup> run

<sup>13</sup> till

<sup>14</sup> 'I wald I had lost hir' would

be more metrical

<sup>15</sup> row

<sup>16</sup> deaf

<sup>17</sup> tarrying

<sup>18</sup> anywhere; MS. awro (see  
*NED.* s.v. *owhere*)

<sup>19</sup> fallow, unplowed

Stand styll.

*Gib.* Qwhy?

*Coll.* Ffor he commys, hope I.

*Gib.* He wyll make us both a ly<sup>1</sup>  
Bot-if we be war.<sup>2</sup>

*Enter DAW, the Third Shepherd. At first he thinks himself alone*

5 *Daw.* Crystys crosse me spede and Sant Nycholas!  
Therof had I nede, it is wars then it was.  
Whoso couthe take hede and lett the warld pas,  
It is ever in drede, and brekyll<sup>3</sup> as glas,  
And slythys.<sup>4</sup>

10 This warld fowre<sup>5</sup> never so,  
With mervels mo and mo —  
Now in weyll,<sup>6</sup> now in wo,  
And all thyng wrythys.<sup>7</sup>

Was never syn Noe<sup>8</sup> floode sich floodys seyn,  
15 Wyndys and ranys so rude, and stormes so keyn —  
Som stamerd, som stod in dowte, as I weyn.  
Now God turne all to good! I say as I mene,  
Ffor ponder:

These floodys so thay drowne,  
20 Both in feyldys and in towne,  
And berys all downe,

And that is a wonder! [*Catches sight of the others.*]

We that walk on the nyghtys, oure catell to kepe,  
We se sodan syghtys, when othere men slepe.  
25 Yit me thynk my hart lyghtys,<sup>9</sup> I se shrewys<sup>10</sup> pepe.

[*Still soliloquizing.*]

Ye ar two [t]all<sup>11</sup> wyghtys — I wyll gyff my shepe  
A turne.

<sup>1</sup> lie

<sup>2</sup> wary

<sup>3</sup> brittle

<sup>4</sup> slides

<sup>5</sup> fared

<sup>6</sup> weal

<sup>7</sup> turns, changes

<sup>8</sup> Noah's

<sup>9</sup> grows light

<sup>10</sup> rascals

<sup>11</sup> em. Kittredge

— Bot full yll have I ment<sup>1</sup>:

As I walk on this bent,<sup>2</sup>

I may lyghtly repent,

My toes if I spurne.<sup>3</sup>

[*He first addresses* COLL, *then his master*, GIB.

A, sir, God you save, and master myne!

5

— A drynk fayn wold I have, and somewhat to dyne.

*Coll.* Crystys curs, my knave, thou art a ledyr<sup>4</sup> hyne<sup>5</sup>!

*Gib.* What, the boy lyst rave! Abyde unto syne<sup>6</sup>;

We have made<sup>7</sup> it.

Yll thryft on thy pate!

10

Though the shrew cam late,

Yit is he in state

To dyne, if he had it.

*Daw.* Sich servandys as I, that swettys and swynkys,<sup>8</sup>

Etyys oure brede full dry, and that me forthynkys.<sup>9</sup>

15

We ar oft weytt and wery when master-men wynkys,<sup>10</sup>

Yit commys full lately<sup>11</sup> both dyners and drynkys.

Bot nately<sup>12</sup>

Both oure dame and oure syre,

When we have ryn in the myre,

20

Thay can nyp<sup>13</sup> at oure hyre,

And pay us full lately.

Bot here my trouth, master, for the fayr<sup>14</sup> that ye make,

I shall do therafter<sup>15</sup> — wyrk as I take;

I shall do a lytyll, sir, and emang<sup>16</sup> ever lake,<sup>17</sup>

25

Ffor yit lay my soper never on my stomake

In feyldys.

<sup>1</sup> planned (to visit the sheep,  
since he may stumble in  
the dark)

<sup>2</sup> heath, open field

<sup>3</sup> stub

<sup>4</sup> worthless

<sup>5</sup> hind

<sup>6</sup> wait till later

<sup>7</sup> finished; MS. mayde

<sup>8</sup> toil

<sup>9</sup> grieves

<sup>10</sup> sleep

<sup>11</sup> reluctantly, after the  
proper time

<sup>12</sup> to some purpose, thoroughly

<sup>13</sup> take away bits

<sup>14</sup> wages

<sup>15</sup> in proportion

<sup>16</sup> the whole time

<sup>17</sup> be lacking

Wherto shuld I threpe <sup>1</sup>?  
 With my staf can I lepe,  
 And men say, 'Lyght chepe <sup>2</sup>  
                   Letherly <sup>3</sup> foryeldys. <sup>4</sup>'

5 *Coll.* Thou were an yll lad to ryde on <sup>5</sup> wowyng  
 With a man that had bot lytyll of spendyng.  
*Gib.* Peasse, boy, I bad! — no more jangling,  
 Or I shall make the full rad, <sup>6</sup> by the hevens Kyng,  
                   With thy gawdys <sup>7</sup>!

10 Wher ar oure shepe, boy, we skorne <sup>8</sup>?  
*Daw.* Sir, this same day at morne  
 I thaym left in the corne,  
                   When thay rang lawdys <sup>9</sup>;

They have pasture good, thay can not go wrong.

15 *Coll.* That is right, by the roode! thyse nyghtys ar long;  
 Yit I wold, or we yode, <sup>10</sup> oone gaf us a song.

*Gib.* So I thocht as I stode — to myrth us emong. <sup>11</sup>

*Daw.*               I grauntt.

*Coll.* Lett me syng the tenory.

20 *Gib.* And I the tryble so hye.

*Daw.* Then the meyne <sup>12</sup> fallys to me;  
                   Lett se how you chauntt.

[*They sing.*

*Enter MAK, with a cloak thrown over his tunic* <sup>13</sup>

*Mak.* Now, Lord, for thy naymes vii, that made both moyn and starnes,  
 Well mo then I can neven, <sup>14</sup> thi will, Lorde, of me tharnys <sup>15</sup>;

25 I am all uneven <sup>16</sup> — that moves oft my harnes <sup>17</sup>;

Now wold God I were in heven, for the[re] <sup>18</sup> wepe no barnes <sup>19</sup>  
                   So styll!

<sup>1</sup> complain

<sup>2</sup> easy bargain

<sup>3</sup> badly

<sup>4</sup> repays

<sup>5</sup> a-

<sup>6</sup> frightened

<sup>7</sup> tricks

<sup>8</sup> (?)

<sup>9</sup> lauds (before daybreak)

<sup>10</sup> before we went

<sup>11</sup> to gladden us the while

<sup>12</sup> middle part

<sup>13</sup> MS. Tunc intrat Mak, in clamide  
           se super togam vestitus

<sup>14</sup> name

<sup>15</sup> lacks

<sup>16</sup> at odds, at sixes and sevens

<sup>17</sup> brains

<sup>18</sup> em. E.

<sup>19</sup> children

*Coll.* Who is that pypys so poore?

*Mak.* Wold God ye wust how I foore<sup>1</sup>!

[*Coll.*<sup>2</sup>] Lo, a man that walkys on the moore,  
And has not all his wyll!

*Gib.* Mak, where has thou gon<sup>3</sup>? Tell us thythyng.<sup>4</sup> 5

*Daw.* Is he comen? Then ylk on take hede to his thyng.<sup>5</sup>  
[*Snatches his own cloak from MAK.*<sup>6</sup>

*Mak.* What! Ich be a yoman, I tell you, of the king,  
[*Pretending not to know them.*

The self and the same, sond<sup>7</sup> from a greatt lordyng,  
And sich.<sup>8</sup>

Ffy on you! Goyth hence 10

Out of my presence!

I must have reverence—

Why, who be Ich?

*Coll.* Why make ye it so qwaynt,<sup>9</sup> Mak? Ye do wrang.

*Gib.* Bot, Mak, lyst ye saynt<sup>10</sup>? I trow that ye lang.<sup>11</sup> 15

*Daw.* I trow the shrew<sup>12</sup> can paynt,<sup>13</sup> the dewyll myght hym hang!

*Mak.* Ich shall make complaynt, and make you all to thwang,<sup>14</sup>

At a worde,

And tell evyn<sup>15</sup> how ye doth.

*Coll.* Bot, Mak, is that sothe? 20

Now take outt that sothren<sup>16</sup> tothe,

And sett in a torde<sup>17</sup>!

*Gib.* Mak, the dewill in youre ee! A stroke wold I leyne<sup>18</sup> you.

*Daw.* Mak, know ye not me? By God, I couthe teyn<sup>19</sup> you.

*Mak.* God looke<sup>20</sup> you all thre! Me thoght I had sene you, 25

[*As if recognizing them.*

<sup>1</sup> fared

<sup>2</sup> em. Child

<sup>3</sup> MS. gom (em. E.)

<sup>4</sup> news

<sup>5</sup> property

<sup>6</sup> MS. & accipit clamidem

ab ipso

<sup>7</sup> messenger

<sup>8</sup> so forth

<sup>9</sup> do you behave so strangely

<sup>10</sup> play the saint

<sup>11</sup> are restless (love change?)

<sup>12</sup> rascal

<sup>13</sup> deceive

<sup>14</sup> to be whipped

<sup>15</sup> exactly

<sup>16</sup> southern (Child under-stands 'deceitful')

<sup>17</sup> piece of dung

<sup>18</sup> lend

<sup>19</sup> trouble

<sup>20</sup> bless

Ye ar a fare compane.

*Coll.*

Can ye now mene you<sup>1</sup>?

*Gib.*

Shrew, jape<sup>2</sup>!

Thus late as thou goys,

What wyll men suppos?

5 And thou has an yll noys<sup>3</sup>

Of stelyng of shepe.

*Mak.* And I am trew as steyll, all men waytt<sup>4</sup>;

Bot a sekenes I feyll that haldys<sup>5</sup> me full haytt<sup>6</sup>:

My belly farys not weyll, it is out of astate.

10 *Daw.* 'Seldom lyys the dewyll dede by the gate.'

*Mak.* Therfor

Full sore am I and yll,

If I stande stone-styll.

I ete not an nedyll<sup>7</sup>

15 Thys moneth and more.

*Coll.* How farys thi wyff? By my hoode, how farys sho?

*Mak.* Lyys walteryng,<sup>8</sup> by the roode, by the fyere, lo!

And a howse full of brude<sup>9</sup>; she drynkys well, to.

Yll spede othere good that she wyll do!

20 Bot s[h]o<sup>10</sup>

Etys as fast as she can;

And ilk yere that commys to man

She bryngys furth a lakan,<sup>11</sup>

And, som yeres, two.

25 Bot were I not more gracy[o]us,<sup>12</sup> and rychere be<sup>13</sup> far,

I were<sup>14</sup> eten outt of howse and of harbar<sup>15</sup>;

Yit is she a fowll dowse,<sup>16</sup> if ye com nar;

Ther is none that trowse nor knowys a war<sup>17</sup>

Then ken I.

<sup>1</sup> remember

<sup>2</sup> make jokes

<sup>3</sup> reputation

<sup>4</sup> know

<sup>5</sup> keeps

<sup>6</sup> hot

<sup>7</sup> particle, bit

<sup>8</sup> rolling about

<sup>9</sup> brood, children

<sup>10</sup> em. H.

<sup>11</sup> baby (*lit.* toy)

<sup>12</sup> prosperous

<sup>13</sup> by

<sup>14</sup> should be

<sup>15</sup> shelter

<sup>16</sup> doxy

<sup>17</sup> worse



Now wyll ye se what I profer :

To gyf all in my cofer

To-morne at next<sup>1</sup> to offer

Hyr hed-maspenny.<sup>2</sup>

*Coll.* I am cold and nakyd, and wold have a fyere.

5

*Gib.* I wote so forwakyd<sup>3</sup> is none in this shyre !

I wold slepe if<sup>4</sup> I takyd les to my hyere.<sup>5</sup>

*Daw.* I am wery, forrakyd,<sup>6</sup> and run in the myre —

Wake thou !

*Gib.* Nay, I wyll lyg downe by,

10

Ffor I must slepe truly.

*Daw.* As good a mans son was I

As any of you.<sup>7</sup>

Bot, Mak, com heder ! betwene shall thou lyg downe.

*Mak.* Then myght I lett<sup>8</sup> you bedene<sup>9</sup> of that ye wold rowne.<sup>10</sup> 15

No drede.

[*He says his prayers.*]

' Ffro my top to my too,

<sup>1</sup> at length (?)

<sup>2</sup> funeral dues (see 6 22)

<sup>3</sup> weary with waking

<sup>4</sup> even if

<sup>5</sup> hire

<sup>6</sup> worn out with walking

<sup>7</sup> Two lines are apparently

lost here

<sup>8</sup> hinder

<sup>9</sup> completely

<sup>10</sup> whisper

5. *Coll.* : MS. gives this line to Daw, and makes it follow Gib's next speech ; but Gib's speech requires Daw's next as an immediate answer.

8. *Daw.* : MS. assigns this to Coll, but Daw and his master, Gib, are having a dispute as to who shall keep awake.

17. In the *Prima Pastorum* (290-5), one of the shepherds says, as they prepare to lie down :

Ffor ferde we be fryht, a crosse let us kest :

' Cryst-crosse, benedyght eest and west,

Ffor drede.

Jesus onazorus,

Crucyefixus,

Morcus, Andreus,

God be oure spede !'

Cf. the blessing in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* 292-300 :

Therwith the nightspel seyde he anonrightes

On foure halves of the hous aboute,

And on the threshfold of the dore withoute :

' Jesu Crist, and sēynt Benedight,

Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,

For nightes verye, the white *Pater Noster* !

Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster ?'

*Manus tuas commendo,*<sup>1</sup>

*Poncio Pilato;*

Cryst-crosse me spede !<sup>2</sup>

[*While the Shepherds sleep on, he rises.*<sup>2</sup>

Now were tyme for a man that lakkys what he wold

- 5 To stalk prevely than unto a fold,  
And neemly<sup>3</sup> to wyrk than, and be not to bold,  
Ffor he might aby<sup>4</sup> the bargan, if it were told

At the endyng.

Now were tyme for to reyll<sup>5</sup>;

- 10 Bot he nedys good counsell  
That fayn wold fare weyll,  
And has bot lytyll spendyng.<sup>6</sup> [*He works a spell.*

Bot abowte you a serkyll,<sup>7</sup> as rownde as a moyn,<sup>8</sup>

Kest<sup>9</sup> now<sup>10</sup> I wyll, tyll that it be noyn,

- 15 That ye lyg stone-styll to that I have doyne ;  
And I shall say thertyll of good wordys a foyne<sup>11</sup> :

‘ On hight,

Over youre heydys, my hand I lyft.

Outt go youre een ! fordo<sup>12</sup> your syght !’ —

- 20 Bot yit I must make better shyft,  
And<sup>13</sup> it be right.

Lord, what<sup>14</sup> thay slepe hard ! — that may ye all here.

Was I never a shepard, bot now wyll I lere<sup>15</sup> ;

If the flok be skard,<sup>16</sup> yit shall I nyp<sup>17</sup> nere.

- 25 How ! drawes hederward ! Now mendys oure chere  
Ffrom<sup>18</sup> sorow ;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke 23. 46

<sup>2</sup> MS. Tunc surgit, pastoribus dormientibus, & dicit :

<sup>3</sup> nimble

<sup>4</sup> atone for

<sup>5</sup> ramble

<sup>6</sup> money to spend

<sup>7</sup> circle (a magician's imaginary circle)

<sup>8</sup> *oy* phonetically = *ō* in this text

<sup>9</sup> cast (see note on 535 17)

<sup>10</sup> MS. to I have done that ;

but this seems to have

been anticipated from

next line by some scribe

<sup>11</sup> few

<sup>12</sup> destroy

<sup>13</sup> if

<sup>14</sup> how

<sup>15</sup> learn

<sup>16</sup> frightened

<sup>17</sup> steal up

<sup>18</sup> MS. (ffron em. E.)

A fatt shepe, I dar say !

A good flese, dar I lay<sup>1</sup>!

Eftwhyte<sup>2</sup> when I may,

Bot this will I borrow.

[Exit with the sheep.]

SCENE II

MAK'S cottage. *Enter MAK*

[*Mak.*] How, Gyll, art thou in? Gett us som lyght.

*Gill.* Who makys sich dyn this tyme of the nyght?

I am sett for to spyn, I hope not I myght

Ryse a penny to wyn,<sup>8</sup> I shrew<sup>a</sup> them on hight<sup>5</sup>!

So far

A huswyff that has bene —

To be rasyd <sup>6</sup> thus betwene,<sup>7</sup>

Here may no note<sup>8</sup> be sene,

Ffor<sup>9</sup> sich small charys.<sup>10</sup>

*Mak.* Good wyff, open the hek <sup>11</sup>! Seys thou not what I bryng?

*Gill.* I may thole<sup>12</sup> the dray<sup>18</sup> the snek.<sup>14</sup> A, com in, my swetyng ! 15

*Mak.* Yee, thou thar<sup>16</sup> not rek of<sup>16</sup> my long standyng.

[*Reproachfully.*

*Gill.* By the nakyd nek art thou lyke for to hyng.

*Mak.* Do way<sup>17</sup>!

I am worthy my mete,

Ffor, in a strate,<sup>18</sup> can I gett

More then thay that swynke and swette

All the long day.

[Shows GILL the sheep.

Thus it fell to my lott, Gyll, I had sich grace.<sup>19</sup>

*Gill.* It were a fowll blott to be hanged for the case.

<sup>1</sup> **wager**

2 return, repay

<sup>8</sup> I do not expect that I could  
gain a penny by rising

4 curse

**δ** aloud, openly

6 rushed

7 ever and anon

<sup>8</sup> work (i.e. completed task)

<sup>9</sup> because of

10 jobs

<sup>11</sup> inner door

12 suffer

**18 to draw**

14 latch

15 need

16 care about

17 get along

18 at a pinch

19 luck

*Mak.* I have skapyd, Jelott,<sup>1</sup> oft as hard a glase.<sup>2</sup>

*Gill.* ' Bot so-long goys the pott to the water,' men says,

' At last

Comys it home broken.'

5 *Mak.* Well knowe I the token,

Bot let it never be spoken! —

Bot com and help fast.

I woid he were slayn, I lyst well ete<sup>3</sup>;

This twelmo[n]the<sup>4</sup> was I not so fayn of oone shepe-mete.<sup>5</sup>

10 *Gill.* Com thay or<sup>6</sup> he be slayn, and here the shepe blete —

*Mak.* Then myght I be tane. That were a cold swette!

Go spar<sup>7</sup>

The gaytt<sup>8</sup> doore.

*Gill.* Yis, Mak.

15 Ffor and thay com at thy bak —

*Mak.* Then myght I far, by<sup>9</sup> all the pak,

The dewill of the war.<sup>10</sup>

*Gill.* A good bowrde<sup>11</sup> have I spied, syn thou can<sup>12</sup> none:

Here shall we hym hyde, to<sup>13</sup> thay be gone,

20 In my credyll.<sup>14</sup> — Abyde<sup>15</sup>! Lett me alone! —

And I shall lyg besyde in chyl[d]bed, and grone.

*Mak.* Thou red,<sup>16</sup>

And I shall say thou was lyght<sup>17</sup>

Of a knave<sup>18</sup> childe this nyght.

25 *Gill.* Now well is me day<sup>19</sup> bright

That ever was I bred!

This is a good gyse,<sup>20</sup> and a far[e] cast,<sup>21</sup>

Yit a woman[s] avyse helpys at the last.

<sup>1</sup> French form of 'Gill' (?)

<sup>2</sup> rub, swipe, plight (*lit.* blow)

<sup>3</sup> greatly desire to eat

<sup>4</sup> em. K.

<sup>5</sup> meal of mutton

<sup>6</sup> ere

<sup>7</sup> fasten

<sup>8</sup> outer

<sup>9</sup> fare, at the hands of; MS.

by for (em. Skeat, Loge-  
man)

<sup>10</sup> the devil the worse, a devil-  
ish deal worse

<sup>11</sup> jest

<sup>12</sup> knowest

<sup>13</sup> until

<sup>14</sup> cradle

<sup>15</sup> wait

<sup>16</sup> make ready

<sup>17</sup> delivered

<sup>18</sup> boy

<sup>19</sup> the day

<sup>20</sup> way

<sup>21</sup> clever contrivance

I wote never who spyse ; agane go thou fast.

*Mak.* Bot <sup>1</sup> I com <sup>2</sup> or thay ryse, els blawes a cold blast !

I wyll go slepe.

Yit slepys all this meneye,<sup>3</sup>

And I shall go stalk prevely,

As it had never bene I

That caryed thare shepe.

### SCENE III

*The moors near Horbury*

*Enter* COLL, GIB, DAW, and MAK

*Coll.* *Resurrex a mortuis !* have hald my hand !

*Judas carnas dominus !* I may not well stand.

My foytt slepys, by Jesus ! and I water-fastand.<sup>4</sup>

I thocht that we layd us full nere Yngland.

*Gib.* A ! ye !

Lord, what I have slept weyll !

As fresh as an eyll<sup>5</sup> ;

As lyght I me feyll<sup>6</sup>

As leyfe on a tre !

*Daw.* Benste<sup>7</sup> be herein ! So my body<sup>8</sup> qwakys

My hart is outt of skyn, what so it makys.

Who makys all this dyn ? So my browes blakys,<sup>9</sup>

To the dowore<sup>10</sup> wyll I wyn. Harke, felows, wakys !

We were fowre ;

Se ye awre<sup>11</sup> of Mak now ?

*Coll.* We were up or thou.

*Gib.* Man, I gyf God avowe

Yit yede<sup>12</sup> he na owre.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> unless

<sup>2</sup> reach there

<sup>3</sup> company

<sup>4</sup> fasting on water

<sup>5</sup> eel

<sup>6</sup> feel myself

<sup>7</sup> a blessing

<sup>8</sup> MS. illegible ; E., H. hart ;

Kittredge, M. body

<sup>9</sup> grow black

<sup>10</sup> door

<sup>11</sup> anywhere

<sup>12</sup> went

<sup>13</sup> nowhere ; MS. nawre

*Daw.* Me thocht he was lapt in a wolfe-skyn.

*Coll.* So are many now hapt, namely<sup>1</sup> within.

*Daw.*<sup>2</sup> When we had long napt, me thocht with a gyn<sup>3</sup>

A fatt shepe he trapt, bot he mayde no dyn.

5 *Gib.*<sup>4</sup> Be styll,

Thi dreme makys the woode<sup>5</sup>;

It is bot fantom, by the roode!

*Coll.* Now God turne all to good,

If it be his wyll.

10 *Gib.* Ryse, Mak, for shame! Thou lygys right lang.

*Mak.* Now, Crystys holy name be us emang!

What is this? For Sant Jame, I may not well gang!

I trow I be the same. A, my nek has lygen wrang

Enoghe!

15 *Mekill* thank! Syn yistereven,

Now, by Sant Stevyn,<sup>6</sup>

I was flayd<sup>7</sup> with a swevyn,<sup>8</sup>

My hart out ofsloghe.<sup>9</sup>

I thocht Gyll began to crok, and travell<sup>10</sup> full sad,

20 Wel ner<sup>11</sup> at the fyrst cok, of a yong lad

Ffor to mend oure flok; then be I never glad—

I have tow on my rok more then ever I had.

A, my heede!

A house full of yong tharmes!

25 The dewill knok outt thare harnes<sup>12</sup>!

Wo is hym has many barnes,

And therto lytyll brede!

<sup>1</sup> especially

<sup>2</sup> MS. ii pastor (em. M.)

<sup>3</sup> snare, trap

<sup>4</sup> MS. iii pastor (em. M.)

<sup>5</sup> mad

<sup>6</sup> MS. strevyn (em. H.)

<sup>7</sup> tormented

<sup>8</sup> dream

<sup>9</sup> which smote my heart out (?)

<sup>10</sup> travail

<sup>11</sup> well nigh

<sup>12</sup> brains

22. rok: distaff; the phrase means 'business to attend to' (cf. Chaucer, *Miller's Tale* 588 (A 3774), and Skeat's note).

24. tharmes: children (*lit.* bowels, Lat. *viscera*; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 8. 478; Shakespeare, *M. for M.* 3. 1. 29).

I must go home, by youre lefe, to Gyll, as I thoght,  
 I pray you looke<sup>1</sup> my slefe,<sup>2</sup> that I steyll noght;  
 I am loth you to grefe, or from you take oght. [Exit MAK.]

*Daw.* Go furth, yll myght thou chefe<sup>3</sup>! Now wold I we soght

This morne

5

That we had all oure store.

*Coll.* Bot I will go before.

Let us mete.

*Gib.* Whore?

*Daw.* At the crokyd thorne.

10

#### SCENE IV

MAK'S cottage. MAK enters

*Mak.* Undo this doore! Who is here? How long shall I stand?

*Gill.* Who makys sich a bere<sup>4</sup>? Now walk in the wenyand.

*Mak.* A, Gyll, what chere? It is I, Mak, youre husbände.

*Gill.* Then may we se<sup>5</sup> here the dewill in a bande,<sup>6</sup>

Syr Gyle<sup>7</sup>!

15

Lo, he commys with a lote<sup>8</sup>

As he were holden in the throte.

I may not syt at my note<sup>9</sup>

A handlang-while<sup>10</sup>!

*Mak.* Wyll ye here what fare she makys to gett hir a glose<sup>11</sup>? 20

And dos noght bot lakys,<sup>12</sup> and clowse<sup>13</sup> hir toose.

*Gill.* Why, who wanders? Who wakys? Who commys? Who gose?

Who brewys? Who bakys? What makys nie thus hose<sup>14</sup>?

And than

<sup>1</sup> look in

<sup>2</sup> sleeve

<sup>3</sup> prosper

<sup>4</sup> noise, clamor

<sup>5</sup> MS. be (em. Kittredge)

<sup>6</sup> bond, chain

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 529, note 9

<sup>8</sup> voice

<sup>9</sup> work

<sup>10</sup> an instant

<sup>11</sup> pretext

<sup>12</sup> amuse herself

<sup>13</sup> strokes, caresses

<sup>14</sup> hoarse

10. *crokyd thorne*: perhaps the Shepherds' Thorn of Mapplewell, three miles northwest of Barnsley, and distant about eight miles from Horbury (see England's ed., p. xiv).

13. *wenyand*: waning of the moon, i.e. unlucky time (cf. *wanion*, e.g. Shakespeare, *Per.* 2. 1. 17).

It is rewthe to beholde ;  
 Now in hote, now in colde,  
 Ffull wofull is the householde  
 That wantys a woman.

- 5 Bot what ende has thou mayde with the hyrdys,<sup>1</sup> Mak ?  
*Mak.* The last worde that thay sayde when I turnyd my bak,  
 Thay wold looke that thay hade thare shepe all the pak.  
 I hope <sup>2</sup> thay wyll nott be well payde <sup>3</sup> when thay thare shepe lak,  
 Perde !  
 10 Bot howso the gam <sup>4</sup> gose,  
 To me thay wyll suppose,<sup>5</sup>  
 And make a fowll noyse,  
 And cry outt apon me.

- Bot thou must do as thou hyght.<sup>6</sup>  
 15 *Gill.* I accorde me thertyll.  
 I shall swedyll <sup>7</sup> hym right in my credyll ;  
 If it were a gretter slyght,<sup>8</sup> yit couthe I help tyll.  
 I wyll lyg downe stright,<sup>9</sup> com hap <sup>10</sup> me.  
*Mak.* I wyll.

- Gill.* Behynde !  
 20 Com Coll and his maroo,<sup>11</sup>  
 Thay wyll nyp us full naroo.  
*Mak.* Bot I may cry out ' Haroo ! '  
 The shepe if thay fynde.

- Gill.* Harken ay when thay call — thay will com onone.  
 25 Com and make redy all, and syng by thyn oone <sup>12</sup> ;  
 Syng ' lullay ' thou shall, for I must grone,  
 And cry outt by the wall on Mary and John,  
 Ffor sore.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> shepherds<sup>2</sup> suspect<sup>3</sup> pleased<sup>4</sup> sport<sup>5</sup> they will suspect me<sup>6</sup> promised<sup>7</sup> swaddle<sup>8</sup> trick<sup>9</sup> straightway<sup>10</sup> wrap, cover<sup>11</sup> companion = Gib (cf. Wordsworth's 'winsome marrow,' *Yarrow Unvisited*)<sup>12</sup> alone, by thyself<sup>13</sup> pain



Syng 'lullay' on fast  
 When thou heris at the last;  
 And, bot I play a fals cast,<sup>1</sup>  
 Trust me no more.

## SCENE V

*The moors near Horbury. Enter COLL, GIB, and DAW*

*Daw.* A, Coll, goode morne, why slepys thou nott? 5  
*Coll.* Alas, that ever was I borne! We have a fowll blott —  
 A fat wedir<sup>2</sup> have we lorne.

*Daw.* Mary, Godys forbott<sup>3</sup>!  
*Gib.* Who shuld do us that skorne? That were a fowll spott.  
*Coll.* Som shrewe.

I have soght with my dogys 10  
 All Horbery<sup>4</sup> shrogys,<sup>5</sup>  
 And, of xv hogys,<sup>6</sup>  
 Ffond I bot oone ewe.

*Daw.* Now trow me, if ye will — by Sant Thomas of Kent,<sup>7</sup>  
 Ayther Mak or Gyll was at that assent.<sup>8</sup> 15

*Coll.* Peasse, man, be still! I sagh when he went.  
 Thou sklanders hym yll, thou aght to repent  
 Goode spede.

*Gib.* Now as ever myght I the,<sup>9</sup>  
 If I shuld evyn here de,<sup>10</sup> 20  
 I wold say it were he  
 That dyd that same dede!

*Daw.* Go we theder, I rede,<sup>11</sup> and ryn<sup>12</sup> on oure feete.  
 Shall I never ete brede the sothe to<sup>13</sup> I weet!<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> shrewd trick (on the shepherds)	southwest of Wakefield, in Yorkshire	<sup>9</sup> prosper
<sup>2</sup> wether	<sup>5</sup> thickets	<sup>10</sup> die
<sup>3</sup> God forbid ( <i>lit.</i> God's prohibition)	<sup>6</sup> young sheep	<sup>11</sup> counsel
<sup>4</sup> Horbury, four miles	<sup>7</sup> Thomas à Becket	<sup>12</sup> Daw is always 'rynning'
	<sup>8</sup> agreement, concerted action	<sup>13</sup> till
		<sup>14</sup> know; MS. wytt (H. weete)

*Coll.* Nor drynk in my heede, with hym tyll I mete.

*Gib.* I wyll rest in no stede tyll that I hym grete,  
My brothere.<sup>1</sup>

Oone <sup>2</sup> I will hight :

5 Tyll I se hym in sight,

Shall I never slepe one nyght

Ther <sup>3</sup> I do anothere.

# SCENE VI

*MAK'S cottage. MAK singing within, and GILL groaning*

*Daw.* Will ye here how thay hak <sup>4</sup> ? Oure syre lyst croyne.<sup>5</sup>

*Coll.* Hard <sup>6</sup> I never none crak <sup>7</sup> so clere out of toyne.<sup>8</sup>

10 Call on hym.

*Gib.* Mak ! Undo youre doore soyne !

*Mak.* Who is that spak, as it were noyne,<sup>9</sup>  
On loft <sup>10</sup> ?

Who is that, I say ?

*Daw.* Goode felowse, were it day —

15 *Mak.* As far as ye may,  
Good, spekys soft

Over a seke woman's heede, that is at maylleasse <sup>11</sup> ;  
I had lever be dede or she had any dyseasse.<sup>12</sup>

*Gill.* Go to anothere stede,<sup>13</sup> I may not well qweasse.<sup>14</sup>

20 Ich <sup>15</sup> fote that ye trede goys thorow my nese <sup>16</sup>  
So hee.<sup>17</sup>

*Coll.* Tell us, Mak, if ye may,  
How fare ye, I say ?

*Mak.* Bot ar ye in this towne <sup>18</sup> to-day ? —  
25 Now how fare ye ?

<sup>1</sup> = Coll  
<sup>2</sup> one thing  
<sup>3</sup> where  
<sup>4</sup> jangle  
<sup>5</sup> croon  
<sup>6</sup> heard

<sup>7</sup> bray, bawl  
<sup>8</sup> tune  
<sup>9</sup> noon  
<sup>10</sup> up there  
<sup>11</sup> distress (OF. *malaise*)  
<sup>12</sup> suffering

<sup>13</sup> place  
<sup>14</sup> breathe (*lit.* wheeze)  
<sup>15</sup> each  
<sup>16</sup> nose  
<sup>17</sup> loud  
<sup>18</sup> farmstead



As I am true and lele,<sup>1</sup> to God here I pray  
That this be the fyrst mele that I shall ete this day.

*Coll.* Mak, as have I ceyll,<sup>2</sup> avyse the, I say —  
'He lernyd tymely<sup>3</sup> to steyll that couth not say nay.'

5 *Gill.* I swelt<sup>4</sup>!  
Outt, thefys, fro my wonys<sup>5</sup>!  
Ye com to rob us, for the nonys.  
*Mak.* Here ye not how she gronys?  
Youre hartys shuld melt.

10 *Gill.* Outt, thefys, fro my barne! Negh<sup>6</sup> hym not thor<sup>7</sup>!  
*Mak.* Wyst ye how she had farne,<sup>8</sup> youre hartys wold be sore.  
Ye do wrang, I you warne, that thus commys before  
To a woman that has farne — bot I say no more.

*Gill.* A, my medyll<sup>9</sup>! —  
15 I pray to God so mylde,  
If ever I you begyld,  
That I ete<sup>10</sup> this chylde  
That lygs in this credyll.

*Mak.* Peasse, woman, for Godys payn,<sup>11</sup> and cry not so!  
20 Thou spyllys<sup>12</sup> thy bra[y]ne, and makys me full wo.

*Gib.* I trowe oure shepe be slayn. What finde ye two?

*Daw.* All wyrk we in vayn, as well may we go.

Bot hatters,<sup>13</sup>

I can fynde no flesh,  
25 Hard nor nesh,<sup>14</sup>  
Salt nor fresh,  
Bot two tome<sup>15</sup> platers;

Whik<sup>16</sup> catell bot this, tame nor wylde,  
None, as have I blys, as lowde as he smylde.<sup>17</sup>

1 leal  
2 bliss  
3 early  
4 die  
5 dwelling  
6 approach

7 there  
8 fared  
9 middle, inwards  
10 may eat  
11 i.e. on the cross  
12 dost injure

13 except clothes (I can find nothing)  
14 soft  
15 empty  
16 quick, live  
17 smelled as strongly as he (the sheep) (?)

*Gill.* No, so God me blys, and gyf me joy of my chylde!

*Coll.* We have merkyd<sup>1</sup> amys; I hold us begyld.

*Gib.* Syr, don<sup>2</sup>! —

Syr — oure Lady hym save! —

Is youre chyld a knave<sup>3</sup>?

5

*Mak.* Any lord myght hym have,  
This chyld, to his son.

When he wakyns he kyppys<sup>4</sup> that joy is to se.

*Daw.* In good tyme to hys hyppys,<sup>5</sup> and in cele.<sup>6</sup>

Bot who were<sup>7</sup> his gossypys,<sup>8</sup> so sone rede<sup>9</sup>?

10

*Mak.* So fare fall thare lypys<sup>10</sup>!

*Coll.* Hark now, a le<sup>11</sup>! [*Aside.*

*Mak.* So God thaym thank —

Parkyn, and Gybon Waller, I say,

And gentill John Horne, in good fay;

He made all the garray<sup>12</sup> —

15

With the greatt shank.

*Gib.* Mak, freyndys will we be, ffor we ar all oone.

*Mak.* We? Now I hald for me,<sup>13</sup> for mendys<sup>14</sup> gett I none!

Ffare well all thre, all<sup>15</sup> glad were ye gone.

[*The shepherds leave the house.*

*Daw.* 'Ffare wordys may ther be, bot luf is ther none'

20

This yere.

*Coll.* Gaf ye the chyld anythyng?

*Gib.* I trow not oone farthyng<sup>16</sup>!

*Daw.* Ffast agane will I flyng;

Abyde ye me here.<sup>17</sup> [*Goes back to the house.* 25

Mak, take it to no grefe if I com to thi barne.

*Mak.* Nay thou dos me greatt reprefe,<sup>18</sup> and fowll has thou farne.

<sup>1</sup> aimed

<sup>2</sup> completely

<sup>3</sup> boy

<sup>4</sup> grabs, clutches

<sup>5</sup> hips; see Gen. 49. 25; Prov. 11. 26

<sup>6</sup> happiness

<sup>7</sup> MS. was

<sup>8</sup> sponsors

<sup>9</sup> ready

<sup>10</sup> lips

<sup>11</sup> lie

<sup>12</sup> commotion

<sup>13</sup> myself

<sup>14</sup> amends

<sup>15</sup> very

<sup>16</sup> rush, thing

<sup>17</sup> MS. there

<sup>18</sup> reproach

*Daw.* The child will it not grefe, that lytyll day-starne.<sup>1</sup>

Mak, with youre leyfe, let me gyf youre barne

Bot vi pence. [*He approaches the cradle.*]

*Mak.* Nay, do way, he slepys.

5 *Daw.* Me thynk he pepys.<sup>2</sup>

*Mak.* When he wakyns, he wepys.

I pray you go hence. [*COLL and GIB return.*]

*Daw.* Gyf me lefe hym to kys, and lyft up the clowtt.<sup>3</sup>

[*He sees the sheep.*]

What the dewill is this? He has a long snowte.

10 *Coll.* He is merkyd<sup>4</sup> amys, we wate ill<sup>5</sup> abowte.

*Gib.* 'Ill-spon weft,' iwys, 'ay commys foull owte.'

Ay, so!

He is lyke to oure shepe!

*Daw.* How, Gyb, may I pepe<sup>6</sup>?

15 *Coll.* I trow 'Kynde<sup>7</sup> will crepe<sup>8</sup>

Where it may not go.<sup>9</sup>

*Gib.* This was a qwantt gawde,<sup>10</sup> and a far[e]<sup>11</sup> cast;

It was a hee<sup>12</sup> frawde.

*Daw.* Yee, syrs, wast.<sup>13</sup>

Lett bren<sup>14</sup> this bawde, and bynd hir fast.

20 'A fals skawde<sup>15</sup> hang[s] at the last.'

So shall thou.

Wyll ye se how thay swedyll<sup>16</sup>

His foure feytt in the medyll?

Sagh I never in a credyll

25 A hornyd lad or<sup>17</sup> now.

*Mak.* Peasse byd I! What, lett be youre fare!

I am he that hym gatt,<sup>18</sup> and yond woman hym bare.

<sup>1</sup> See 553 22

<sup>2</sup> whippers

<sup>3</sup> cloth

<sup>4</sup> fashioned (marked?)

<sup>5</sup> wait to no purpose

<sup>6</sup> have a look

<sup>7</sup> nature

<sup>8</sup> A proverb; also found in *Everyman*, l. 316

<sup>9</sup> walk

<sup>10</sup> trick

<sup>11</sup> See 538 27

<sup>12</sup> high, deep

<sup>13</sup> was it

<sup>14</sup> burn

<sup>15</sup> scold

<sup>16</sup> swathe, swaddle

<sup>17</sup> before

<sup>18</sup> begot

*Coll.* What dewill shall he hatt,<sup>1</sup> Mak? Lo, God, Makys<sup>2</sup> ayre<sup>3</sup>!

*Gib.* Lett be all that, now God gyf hym care,

I sagh.<sup>4</sup>

*Gill.* A pratty child is he

As syttys on a womans<sup>5</sup> kne,

A dyllydowne,<sup>6</sup> perde,

To gar<sup>7</sup> a man laghe.

5

*Daw.* I know hym by the eeremarke — that is a good tokyn.

*Mak.* I tell you, syrs, hark! Hys noyse<sup>8</sup> was brokyn;

Sythen<sup>9</sup> told me a clark<sup>10</sup> that he was forspokyn.<sup>11</sup> 10

*Coll.* This is a fals wark. I wold fayn be wrokyn<sup>12</sup>;

Gett wepyn.

*Gill.* He was takyn with<sup>13</sup> an elfe,

I saw it myself;

When the clok stroke twelf

Was he forshapyn.<sup>14</sup>

15

*Gib.* Ye two ar well feft<sup>15</sup> sam<sup>16</sup> in a<sup>17</sup> stede.

*Coll.*<sup>18</sup> Syn thay manteyn thare theft, let do thaym to dede.<sup>19</sup>

*Mak.* If I trespas eft, gyrd of<sup>20</sup> my heede;

With you will I be left.<sup>21</sup>

*Daw.*<sup>22</sup>

Syrs, do my reede:

20

Ffor this trespas

We will nawther ban<sup>23</sup> ne flyte,<sup>24</sup>

Ffyght nor chyte,<sup>25</sup>

Bot have done as tyte,<sup>26</sup>

And cast hym in canvas.

25

[*They go outside, and toss MAK in a sheet.*

<sup>1</sup> be called, named

<sup>2</sup> Mak's

<sup>3</sup> heir

<sup>4</sup> say

<sup>5</sup> MS. wamans (em. M.)

<sup>6</sup> darling

<sup>7</sup> make

<sup>8</sup> nose

<sup>9</sup> since

<sup>10</sup> MS. clerk

<sup>11</sup> bewitched

<sup>12</sup> avenged

<sup>13</sup> enchanted by

<sup>14</sup> transformed

<sup>15</sup> endowed

<sup>16</sup> together

<sup>17</sup> one

<sup>18</sup> MS. iiii pastor (em. M.)

<sup>19</sup> death

<sup>20</sup> strike off

<sup>21</sup> you shall judge

<sup>22</sup> MS. primus pastor (em. M.)

<sup>23</sup> curse

<sup>24</sup> scold

<sup>25</sup> chide

<sup>26</sup> as quickly as possible

## SCENE VII

*The fields near Bethlehem of Judea. Enter the Three Shepherds*

[*Coll.*<sup>1</sup>] Lord, what I am sore, in poynt for to bryst<sup>2</sup>!

In fayth I may no more; therfor wyll I ryst.<sup>3</sup>

*Gib.* As a shepe of vii skore<sup>4</sup> he weyd in my fyst.

Ffor to slepe aywhore<sup>5</sup> me thynk that I lyst.

5 *Daw.* Now, I pray you,

Lyg downe on this grene.

*Coll.* On these thefys yit I mene.<sup>6</sup>

*Daw.* Wherto shuld ye tene<sup>7</sup>?

Do<sup>8</sup> as I say you.

*An ANGEL appears, and sings Gloria in excelsis.*

*Then the ANGEL addresses the shepherds:*<sup>9</sup>

10 *Angel.* Ryse, hyrdmen heynd<sup>10</sup>! for now is he borne

That shall take fro the feynd that Adam had lorne<sup>11</sup>;

That warloo<sup>12</sup> to sheynd<sup>13</sup>, this nyght is he borne.

God is made youre freynd now at this morne,

He behestys.<sup>14</sup>

15 At Bedlem go se;

Ther lygys that fre<sup>15</sup>

In a cryb full poorely,

Betwyx two bestys.

[*Exit.*

*Coll.* This was a qwant stevyn<sup>16</sup> as<sup>17</sup> ever yit I hard.

20 It is a mervell to nevyn<sup>18</sup> thus to be skard.<sup>19</sup>

*Gib.* Of Godys Son of hevyn he spak upward.<sup>20</sup>

All the wod on a levyn<sup>21</sup> me thoght that he gard<sup>22</sup>

Appere.

<sup>1</sup> em. M.

<sup>2</sup> burst

<sup>3</sup> rest

<sup>4</sup> seven score pounds

<sup>5</sup> anywhere

<sup>6</sup> think

<sup>7</sup> trouble

<sup>8</sup> MS. so (em. M.)

<sup>9</sup> MS. Angelus cantat 'Gloria  
in excelsis,' postea dicat:

<sup>10</sup> gentle

<sup>11</sup> lost

<sup>12</sup> wizard

<sup>13</sup> destroy

<sup>14</sup> promises

<sup>15</sup> noble one

<sup>16</sup> voice

<sup>17</sup> MS. that (em suggested  
by M.)

<sup>18</sup> name, speak

<sup>19</sup> frightened

<sup>20</sup> from above

<sup>21</sup> lightning

<sup>22</sup> made



*Daw.* He spake of a Barne

In Bedlem, I you warne.

*Coll.* That betokyns yond starne<sup>1</sup>; [Pointing to the sky.  
Let us seke hym there.

*Gib.* Say, what was his song? Hard ye not how he crakt<sup>2</sup> it, 5  
Thre brefes<sup>3</sup> to a long? *Dis App. 26.4.*

*Daw.* Yee, Mary, he hakt<sup>4</sup> it.

Was no crochett wrong, nor no thyng that lakt it.

*Coll.* Ffor to syng us emong, right as he knakt it,<sup>5</sup>  
I can.

*Gib.* Let se how ye croyne! 10  
Can ye bark at the mone?

*Daw.* Hold youre tonges! Have done!

*Coll.* Hark after, than! [They sing.

*Gib.* To Bedlem he bad that we shuld gang;  
I am full fard<sup>6</sup> that we tary to lang. 15

*Daw.* Be mery and not sad — of myrth is oure sang!  
Everlastyng glad<sup>7</sup> to mede<sup>8</sup> may we fang,<sup>9</sup>

Withoutt noyse.

*Coll.* Hy<sup>10</sup> we theder forthy,<sup>11</sup>  
If<sup>12</sup> we be wete and wery, 20  
To that Chyld and that lady;  
We have it not to lose.

*Gib.* We fynde by the prophecy — let be youre dyn! —  
Of David and Isay, and mo then I myn,<sup>13</sup>  
Thay prophecied by clergy<sup>14</sup> that in a vyrgyn 25  
Shuld he lyght and ly, to slokyn<sup>15</sup> oure syn  
And slake<sup>16</sup> it,

<sup>1</sup> nom.

<sup>2</sup> trilled (?); MS. crakyd

<sup>3</sup> breves (three breves were accounted  
equal to one long in the music of  
that period)

<sup>4</sup> warbled (?)

<sup>5</sup> threw it off

<sup>6</sup> afeard

<sup>7</sup> gladness

<sup>8</sup> for reward

<sup>9</sup> receive

<sup>10</sup> hie

<sup>11</sup> therefore

<sup>12</sup> even if

<sup>13</sup> remember

<sup>14</sup> learning

<sup>15</sup> quench

<sup>16</sup> slacken, abate

[Save] oure kynde<sup>1</sup> from wo,

Ffor Isay sayd so :

*Ecce*<sup>2</sup> *virgo*

*Concipiet*<sup>3</sup> a chylde that is nakyd.

5       *Daw.* Ffull glad may we be, and abyde that day,  
           That Lufly to se, that all myghtys may.<sup>4</sup>  
           Lord, well were me, for ones and for ay,  
           Myght I knele on my kne, som word for to say  
                                 To that Chylde.

10       Bot the angell sayd  
           In a cryb was he layde,  
           He was poorly arayd,  
                                 Both meke<sup>5</sup> and mylde.

15       *Coll.* Patryarkes that has bene, and prophetys beforne,  
           Thay desyryd to have sene<sup>6</sup> this Chylde that is borne.  
           Thay ar gone full clene ; that have thay lorne.  
           We shall se hym, I weyn, or it be morne,  
                                 To tokyn.<sup>7</sup>  
           When I se hym and fele,  
           Then wot I full weyll  
           It is true as steyll  
                                 That prophetys have spokyn :

25       To so poore as we ar[e] that he wold appere,  
           Ffyrst fynd, and declare by his messyngere.  
           *Gib.* Go we now, let us fare, the place is us nere.  
           *Daw.* I am redy and yare,<sup>8</sup> go we in fere<sup>9</sup>  
                                 To that Bright.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> race

<sup>2</sup> MS. cite (em. E.)

<sup>3</sup> Isa. 7. 14 (Vulgate)

<sup>4</sup> has power over all mights

<sup>5</sup> MS. mener (em. K.)

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 13. 17

<sup>7</sup> as a sign

<sup>8</sup> prepared

<sup>9</sup> together

<sup>10</sup> bright one

Lord, if thi wyll<sup>1</sup> be —  
 We ar lewde<sup>2</sup> all thre —  
 Thou grauntt us somkyns<sup>3</sup> gle  
     To comforth thi Wight.<sup>4</sup>

## SCENE VIII

*Bethlehem. A stable. Enter the Shepherds, and kneel*

*Coll.* Hayll, comly and clene ! Hayll, yong Child ! 5  
 Hayll, Maker, as I meyne, of<sup>5</sup> a madyn so mylde !  
 Thou has waryd,<sup>6</sup> I weyne, the warlo so wylde ;  
 The fals gyler<sup>7</sup> of teyn,<sup>8</sup> now goys he begylde. —  
     Lo, he merys,<sup>9</sup>  
 Lo, he laghys, my Swetyng ! — 10  
 A wel fare<sup>10</sup> metyng ;  
 I have holden my hetyng.<sup>11</sup> —  
     Have a bob<sup>12</sup> of cherys.

*Gib.* Hayll, sufferan<sup>13</sup> Savyoure ! Ffor thou has us soght,  
 Hayll, frely Foyde<sup>14</sup> and Floure, that all thyng has wrought ! 15  
 Hayll, full of favoure, that made all of noght !  
 Hayll ! I kneyll and I cowre. A byrd have I broght  
     To my Barne.  
 Hayll, lytyll tyne<sup>15</sup> Mop<sup>16</sup> !  
 Of oure crede thou art Crop.<sup>17</sup> 20  
 I wold drynk on thy cop,<sup>18</sup>  
     Lytyll Daystarne.<sup>19</sup>

*Daw.* Hayll, Derlyng dere, full of godhede !  
 I pray the be nere when that I have nede.

1 MS. wylles  
 2 simple, ignorant  
 3 of some kind  
 4 creature  
 5 from  
 6 cursed  
 7 beguiler (Satan)

8 of sorrow, sorrowful  
 9 grows merry  
 10 very fair  
 11 promise  
 12 bunch, cluster  
 13 sovereign  
 14 noble child

15 tiny  
 16 baby, young creature  
 17 See Heb. 12. 2  
 18 from thy cup  
 19 See 2 Pet. 1. 19 ; Rev. 22. 16

Hayll, swete is thy chere ! My hart wold blede  
To se the sytt here in so poore wede,

With no pennys.

Hayll ! Put furth thy dall<sup>1</sup> !

5 I bryng the bot a ball ;  
Have and play the<sup>2</sup> withall,  
And go to the tenys.<sup>3</sup>

*Mary.* The Fader of heven, God omnypotent,  
That sett all on seven,<sup>4</sup> his Son has he sent.

10 My name couth<sup>5</sup> he<sup>6</sup> neven,<sup>7</sup> and lyght<sup>8</sup> or he went.  
I conceyvyd hym<sup>9</sup> full even thugh myght, as he ment,  
And now is he borne.

He kepe you fro wo !

I shall pray hym so ;

15 Tell furth as ye go,  
And myn<sup>10</sup> on this morne.

*Coll.* Ffarewell, lady, so fare to beholde,  
With thy Chylde on thi kne !

*Gib.* Bot he lygys full cold.

Lord, well is me ; now we go, thou behold.

20 *Daw.* Fforsothe, allredy it semys to be told  
Full oft.

*Coll.* What grace we have fun<sup>11</sup> !

*Gib.* Com furth, now ar we won<sup>12</sup> !

*Daw.* To syng ar we bun,<sup>13</sup>

25 Let take on loft.<sup>14</sup> [They sing.

*Explicit Pagina Pastorum.*<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> fist, hand

<sup>2</sup> refl.

<sup>3</sup> tennis (well known in England by the end of the fourteenth century)

<sup>4</sup> created all things in seven days (?)

<sup>5</sup> did

<sup>6</sup> God the Father

<sup>7</sup> name

<sup>8</sup> alighted, descended (on me)

<sup>9</sup> Christ

<sup>10</sup> think

<sup>11</sup> found

<sup>12</sup> rescued, saved

<sup>13</sup> bound

<sup>14</sup> let us sing aloud

<sup>15</sup> Here ends The Shepherds' Pageant





